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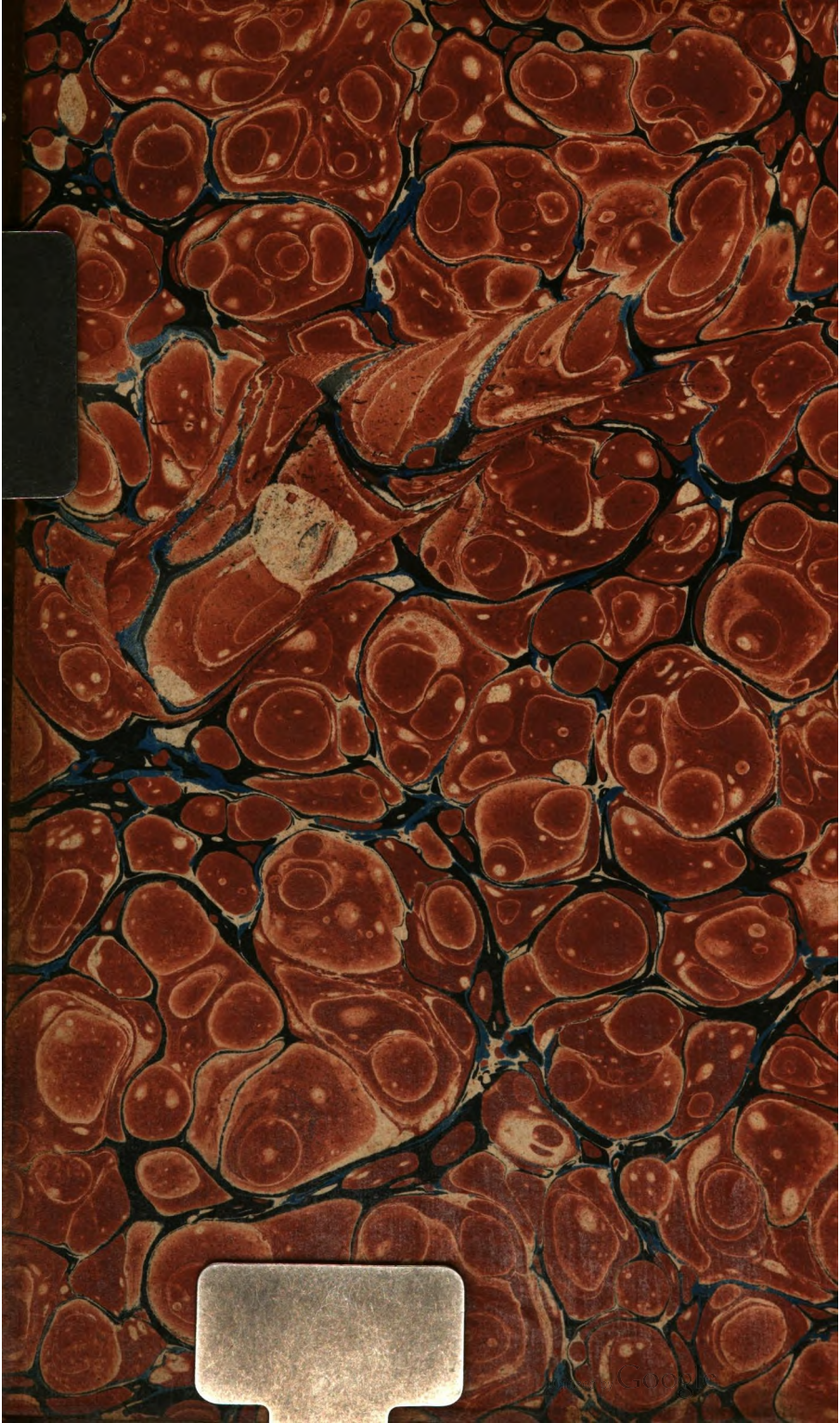
Engraved by J. Swaine.

Memoirs of the life of prince Potemkin. Transl

Grigorii Aleksandrovich Potemkin



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Prince Gregory Alexandrowitz Potemkin.

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MEMOIRS

OF

THE LIFE

OF

PRINCE POTEMKIN;

FIELD-MARSHAL,

AND

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE RUSSIAN ARMY;

GRAND ADMIRAL OF THE FLEETS;

KNIGHT OF THE PRINCIPAL ORDERS OF

PRUSSIA, SWEDEN, AND POLAND, AND OF ALL THE ORDERS OF RUSSIA;

&c. &c.

COMPREHENDING

Original Anecdotes

OF

CATHARINE THE SECOND,

AND OF

THE RUSSIAN COURT.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN.

LONDON:

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INTRODUCTION.

THE portrait drawn of Prince Potemkin by Count Ségur, formerly French ambassador at the Court of St. Petersburgh, who lived a long time in habits of intimacy with that extraordinary man, offers so many shades of contrast, as appear almost incredible to have centered in the same individual.

"In his person were combined the most oppo-
"site defects and accomplishments of every de-
"scription. He was avaricious and ostentatious,
"despotic and popular, inflexible and beneficent,
"haughty and obliging, politic and confiding,
"licentious and superstitious, bold and timid, am-
"bitious and indiscreet: lavish of his bounties to
"his relations, his mistresses, and his favourites;
"yet oftentimes obstinately refusing to pay either
"his household or his creditors; always attached
"to some female and always unfaithful. Nothing
"could equal the vigour of his mind, or the
"indolence of his body. No dangers could appal
"his courage; no difficulties force him to aban-
"don his projects: but the success of an enter-
"prise never failed to disappoint him.

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" He wearied the empire by the number of " his dignities and the extent of his power. " He was fatigued with the burden of his " own existence, envious of every thing that was " not done by himself, and disgusted with all " he did. To him rest was not grateful, nor occu- " pation pleasing. Every thing with him was " desultory; business, pleasure, temper, carriage. " In company, he looked embarrassed; his pre- " sence was a restraint wherever he went. He " was morose to all that stood in awe of him, and " affable to those who accosted him with fami- " liarity.

" Ever lavish of promises, seldom performing " them, and never forgetting what he had heard " or seen. None had read less than he; few " were better informed. He had conversed with " eminent men in all professions, in every science, " in every art. None knew better how to draw " forth and to appropriate to himself the know- " ledge of others. In conversation, he astonished " alike the scholar, the artist, the mechanic, and " the divine. His information was not deep, but " extensive. He never dived into any subjects, " but he spoke well on all.

" The inequality of his temper was productive " of an indescribable singularity in his desires, " in his conduct, and in his manner of life. At " one time he formed the project of becoming

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" Duke of Courland; at another, he thought of " conferring on himself the crown of Poland. " He frequently gave intimations of an inten- " tion to make himself a bishop, or even a " monk. He engaged in building a superb " palace, and desired to sell it before it was " finished. One day he would think of nothing " but war; and only officers, Tartars and Cos- " sacks were admitted to his presence. The " next day he was busily employed in politics; " he would partition the Ottoman empire, and set " all the cabinets of Europe in motion. At other " times he played the courtier; dressed in a " magnificent suit, covered with ribbons, the " gift of every potentate, displaying diamonds " of extraordinary magnitude and brilliancy, " he was giving splendid entertainments without " any motive.

" For whole months together, neglecting alike " business and decorum, he would openly pass his " evenings at the apartments of a young female. " Sometimes shut up in his room for successive " weeks with his nieces and some intimate friends, " he would lounge on a sofa without speaking; " play at chess or at cards with his legs bare, his " shirt-collar unbuttoned, wrapped up in a morn- " ing-gown, knitting his eyebrows, and looking " like an unpolished and squalid Coss ac.

" These singularities, though they frequently

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"put the Empress out of humour, rendered him "yet more interesting to her. In his youth he "had pleased her by the ardour of his passion, "by his valour, and by his masculine beauty: "at a more advanced period of life, he continued "to charm her by flattering her pride, by calm- "ing her apprehensions, by confirming her "power, by caressing her dreams of Oriental "empire, the expulsion of the Barbarians, and "the restoration of the Grecian republics."

Surely, were even the life of such a man not connected with the political and military transactions of a vast empire under the despotic sway of an ambitious Princess, it would still be calculated to interest those who, thinking that "the most proper study for mankind is man," eagerly search for opportunities of becoming acquainted with human nature in its most capricious form.

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THE LIFE

OF

FIELD-MARSHAL

PRINCE POTEMKIN.

CHAP. I.

Birth and education of Potemkin—his share in the Revolution which dethroned Peter III of Russia to constitute Catharine II sole Empress.

Gregory Alexandrovitch Potemkin was born on the 14th of September 1739, on a small estate near Smolensko, whither his father Alexander Potemkin had retired, after having served several years as a captain in one of those regiments of infantry which, in Russia, are particularly destined to garrison some of the inland towns, and

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are seldom, if ever, employed on actual service. Of his two sisters, the eldest was married to a Russian officer of the name of Samoïloff, and the youngest to a German nobleman called von Engelhardt.

The fortune of Potemkin's father was a very moderate one. His family, though originally Polish, had long been settled and naturalized in Russia; but it did not rank among the first nobility of the Russian empire. No individual of the name of Potemkin had ever been entrusted with any of the higher functions of the state, except one who had been sent embassador to England by Peter I; from which mission, however, he derived neither fortune nor honours.

Potemkin received the rudiments of a very limited education, in the house of his father, and, as the latter had no fortune to leave him, he was early destined for the church. At twelve years of age he was sent to the university of Moscow, which was by no means distinguished for the ability of its professors. He there acquired that fondness for theological controversies and that religious disposition which never forsook him during his political and military career. The classics in particular attracted his attention; and his knowledge of Greek and Latin was such, that he felt uncommon delight in the reading of the best poets of antiquity. Nor was he less pleased

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with the poetical works written in the language of his country. Although the Russian language has not yet attained that degree of perfection which a brilliant genius may impart to it at some future time, yet it is the richest, the most simple, and the most picturesque language of modern Europe, and is indisputably that which bears the most striking resemblance to the harmonious idioms of the ancients. This predilection for languages abounding in images, melodious to the ear, and bold in their expressions, inspired Potemkin with a sort of aversion for French poetry, which he used to call symmetric prose. He had been instructed in French from his childhood, and spoke it fluently. Ever since the days of Peter the Great the knowledge of French has formed a conspicuous part of the education of Russian noblemen. The richness of their native language, and the inconceivable variety and difficulty of its pronunciation, give to the Russians in general an uncommon facility in the acquisition of different idioms. In what European language do they meet with difficulties similar to that which an Englishman, Frenchman, German, Spaniard or Italian has to encounter when he learns to pronounce such a word, for instance, as *Prewosgotitelstwa* (excellence)?

Learning, however, had not an attraction sufficiently powerful for the ardent mind of Potemkin.

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The scientific knowledge which he acquired at the university was merely superficial. His vivacity, or rather the violence of his temper, which rendered him incapable of continued application, induced his teachers to pronounce him more fit for the active and perilous pursuits of war, than for the grave, solemn and peaceful avocations of a minister of the gospel. They imparted their observations to his father, who, considering that the situation of an officer in a military state may sometimes lead to a brilliant fortune, readily permitted his son to follow his warlike propensity. Potemkin left the university of Moscow, and after a short stay at his father's house, he was sent to Petersburgh to receive instructions better adapted to the new profession which he was going to embrace.

As he had been strongly recommended to some persons high in office, it was not long ere he obtained a cornetcy in a regiment of horse-guards. Destitute of the means of having his duty done for him, he was obliged to perform it himself, and did it with strict exactitude: but, satisfied with avoiding censure, he shewed no particular eagerness to distinguish himself. His propensity to pleasure frequently led him into bad company, where he contracted that dissoluteness of manners and depravity of mind of which he could never completely divest himself afterwards, and which

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constantly influenced his conduct during his extraordinary career.

It was, however, this dissolute way of life which made Potemkin acquainted with a number of young fashionable men, some of whom belonged to powerful families; a circumstance which gave him patrons and the means of making his fortune. He soon obtained a lieutenancy, which, in the horse-guards, confers the rank of major in the army; and intimately connected himself with the Orloffs. They were five brothers: *Gregory*, afterwards the favourite; *Alexey*, who, in the war against the Turks in 1768, commanded the Russian fleet in the Archipelago; *Vladimir*, who became a senator, and *Feodor* and *Ivan*, who were made chamberlains after the revolution. They were indeed the principal agents in that famous conspiracy which hurled Peter III from the throne of Russia, to place the imperial crown on the brow of Catharine, his spouse, with whom Gregory, the eldest of the five brothers, commenced a love intrigue when she was only Grand Duchess.

Gregory Orloff possessed neither the advantages of birth nor those of education; but he had received from nature courage and beauty. He was an officer in the artillery; while two of his brothers, Alexey and Vladimir, were only common soldiers in the guards. Count Peter Schu-

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valoff, grand master of the artillery, a vain and pompous man, was desirous of having the handsomest of his officers for his aide-de-camp, as he had for his mistress Princess Kourakin, the most beautiful lady of the court. He selected Orloff, and his mistress, pleased with this choice, soon gave the handsome aide-de-camp a hint that she preferred him to his general. Unfortunately, the latter surprised them together. He threatened to exert his interest to have Orloff banished to Siberia. This adventure reached the ears of Catharine. Curiosity led her to wish for an acquaintance with the young officer whose disaster was the subject of public conversation. Orloff was secretly introduced to the Grand Duchess, and as soon as the latter thought herself assured of the boldness and discretion of her lover, she unveiled to him her ambitious designs. On the death of General Schuvaloff she prevailed with lieutenant-general Villebois, who obtained the command of the artillery, to give Orloff the place of captain-paymaster of his corps.

Orloff now lost no opportunity of gaining adherents to her whom he had resolved to make his sole sovereign. Peter III had been but a very short time in possession of the throne, when, by means of his brothers and a few other conspirators, Orloff won over some companies of the guards without imparting to them his real

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design. Having discovered in Potemkin dispositions that might be favourable to his views, he also endeavoured to bring him over to his cause, and easily succeeded in the attempt. Potemkin had frequently seen Catharine, and was an enthusiastic admirer of her beauty. This sentiment of admiration, heightened perhaps by the secret suggestions of ambition, seduced him from the path of duty. His zeal and his activity gained many friends to Catharine, and, in a comparatively low situation, Potemkin did much to insure the success of the enterprise.

On the 28th of June 1762 (the 9th of July 1762, O. S.), at seven in the morning, Catharine went to the quarter of the Ismaïloffsky guards, where she was enthusiastically proclaimed sovereign by the soldiers. The chaplain of the regiment received the oath of the troops on a crucifix. In less than two hours Catharine saw herself surrounded by two thousand warriors, and a great number of the inhabitants of Petersburgh, who mechanically followed her to the church of Kasan, where the archbishop of Novgorod placed the imperial crown on her head.

Count Panin, who, under the Empress Elizabeth, had been employed in several foreign embassies, and on his return had been appointed governor to Paul Petrovitch, the son of Peter and Catharine, though devoted to the latter, had lent

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himself to the plans of the conspirators, with the simple view of declaring Catharine sole guardian of the Grand Duke Paul and regent of the empire during his minority. But he found that it was too late to remonstrate against what had been done, when a strong enthusiasm in favour of Catharine was become general and she had been solemnly and almost unanimously proclaimed autocratrix or sole sovereign ruler of the empire.

Towards noon, the Empress, dressed in the uniform of the guards and decorated with the insignia of the order of St. Andrew, inspected the guards on horseback, and rode through the ranks with princess Dashkoff, who was also in uniform. Potemkin, perceiving that Catharine had no plume in her hat, rode up to offer her his own*. The horse on which he was mounted being accustomed to form into the squadron, was some time before it could be made to quit the side of that of the Empress; which afforded her the first oppor-

* The Rev. *W. Tooke*, in the second edition of his Life of Catharine II, Empress of Russia, says that Potemkin was then but sixteen; and *Count Ségur*, who relates the anecdote differently, stating that Potemkin presented the Empress with his cockade as an ornament for her sword, observes that he was but eighteen. But since all accounts agree that he died in 1791 at the age of 52, he must have been at least two or three and twenty when the revolution, to which he had contributed, placed Catharine on the throne of Russia.

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tunity of noticing the grace and agility of the man who was to gain so great an ascendancy over her.

At six in the evening Catharine a second time mounted her horse. With a drawn sword in her hand and a branch of oak about her temples, she placed herself at the head of the troops that were already on their march to Peterhoff, an imperial palace on the banks of the Neva. Potemkin was one of the numerous courtiers who vied with each other in displaying the greatest ardour to share her dangers and her triumph. The next day he attended Gregory Orloff to Oranienbaum, another imperial palace, built by Menzikoff, eight versts farther, whither the unfortunate Peter had retired, and whence the perfidious Ismaïloff persuaded him to repair to the Empress. Potemkin was charged to escort the betrayed Emperor's carriage to Peterhoff with a sufficient number of troops. It was at Peterhoff that Peter wrote and signed his resignation, which was dictated to him by Count Panin.

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CHAP. II.

Potemkin's first steps on the road to fortune, and the causes of his elevation.

As soon as Catharine saw herself firmly seated on the throne, she bestowed magnificent rewards on the principal actors in the revolt against her husband. Count Panin was made prime minister; the Orloffs received the title of Counts; Gregory Orloff, the favourite, was appointed lieutenant-general, and made a knight of St. Alexander Newsky, the second order of the empire. Several officers of the guards were promoted. Potemkin was made a colonel, and a gentleman of the bed-chamber, with an annual pension of two thousand roubles; and he was immediately dispatched to Stockholm privately to inform Count Ostermann, the Russian ambassador, of the revolution that had taken place at Petersburgh.

On his return from Sweden, Potemkin neglected no opportunity of becoming intimately acquainted with those who were more immediately about the Empress. He possessed an insinuating address, and, when he chose, he could be perfect master of the art of gaining the affections of those

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whose patronage he thought useful to his views. He contrived to render himself agreeable, and even necessary, to the courtiers that stood highest in the favour of Catharine, enlivened their pleasures, and succeeded at last in being admitted to the private parties of the Empress, to whom he was introduced as a most amiable man, particularly calculated to heighten the hilarity of her social hours.

As nature had endowed him with a masculine and noble figure, an artful and insinuating disposition, and a brilliant imagination, Potemkin met with so flattering a reception from his sovereign that he thought himself authorized to pay her the most assiduous court.

Catharine was fond of relieving herself from the cares of the empire in the midst of a private and select society, from which, setting aside the majesty of the throne, she banished every courtly formality, and in which she caused her superiority to be forgotten by the gracefulness of her manners and the enchanting gaiety of her conversation. The perfect freedom which prevailed in these assemblies allowed a decent jocularity. Wit, talents and politeness were the only titles to pre-eminence, and distinction was communicate to amiability. Under the appearance of thinking only of pleasure in these parties, most of the courtiers no doubt were not unmindful of the

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interests of their ambition. Potemkin, among others, who only appeared cheerful, gallant and agreeable, did not lose sight of his object, and thought himself doubly fortunate in advancing towards honour by the road of pleasure.

Whether Catharine, struck at first sight with the noble and commanding figure of her new courtier, actually shewed him marked distinction, or whether the kindness with which she treated him was but the expression of her wonted affability, Potemkin fancied he perceived in the attention with which she honoured him something particular, which immediately led him to form the highest hopes. His excessive vanity would not allow him to reflect that Catharine was endowed with an irresistible gracefulness that shewed itself naturally, without any effort, and promptly gained her the affections even of those who approached her with a strong prepossession against her. He was delighted in thinking that she used this gift for him alone; he no longer beheld her as a sovereign, but simply as an accomplished female, whose favour it was not impossible to obtain. From this instant he formed the design of becoming one day her favourite, and never ceased for a single moment to direct his thoughts and actions to the accomplishment of this project. Whenever he appeared to relinquish it for a time, it was to take a circuitous

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road, which conducted him more safely back to his object. His prospect, however, at this time, must have been extremely distant. The empire which gratitude, love, and habit, gave to Orloff over the heart of the Empress, seemed too firmly established for any one to struggle against him with the smallest hope of success. Orloff at this period harboured designs and formed pretensions to which it would have been dangerous to run counter. He flattered himself he should obtain the hand of his sovereign; and although the Empress frequently expressed some impatience at the tone of authority which he assumed, yet she felt neither the inclination nor the power to hazard an open rupture with the man whose boldness had placed her on the throne.

Potemkin for the moment yielded to obstacles which time would infallibly weaken; but the natural violence of his temper would not allow him to keep within the bounds of a discretion imperiously commanded by circumstances. Some new marks of the kindness of his sovereign having inflamed his courage and his hopes, he assumed beforehand the manners of a preferred lover, raised his tone, and, in short, took liberties which offended the known favourite to such a degree that he resolved not to leave his insolent temerity unpunished.

Potemkin one day called upon Gregory Orloff

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and found him alone with his brother Alexey. The haughty manner and air of assurance with which he approached the two brothers, increased the growing ill-will of the eldest, who thought this a favourable opportunity to let the presumptuous youth feel the effect of his resentment. He intimated as much to Alexey by a secret nod, and they both purposely irritated Potemkin by galling observations, which made the latter forget the respect which he owed to the Orloffs as his superiors in rank. They resented the insult on the spot by falling both violently upon him. He was obliged to submit to a disgraceful treatment which he durst not revenge, and it was on this occasion that he is supposed to have lost an eye, though it is more generally believed that it was struck by a ball in a tennis-court, and that he put it out himself to free it from the blemish which it derived from the accident.

His adventure with the Orloffs was, however, favourable for him in its consequence. Catharine easily discovered the share which she had in the transaction. Regarding Potemkin as a victim of his admiration for her, she would willingly have given him consoling testimonies of her gratitude; but as she dared not offend to such a degree the Orloffs, whom she still feared, she determined to break off those private parties in which Potemkin could no longer appear.

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The natural levity of the Orloffs made them soon forget the affair; they gradually resumed their former intimacy with Potemkin, who, cautiously dissembling, procrastinated his revenge: but availing himself of the imprudence of his enemies, he again approached his sovereign, and improved every opportunity of manifesting how ardently desirous he was of her favour. The manner in which he was received by the Empress strengthened his expectations; his confidence in his success became such, that he was not afraid of owning his hopes. Catharine, far from being displeased at the boldness of this presumption, conferred every day fresh marks of kindness upon her secret admirer. Potemkin was appointed a chamberlain. This office, independent of its giving the rank of major-general and the title of excellency, enabled him to have free access to his sovereign. But this access increased his passion, and the invisible obstacles which his all-powerful rival was yet opposing to his success, reduced him to despair.

Fortunately, the war against the Turks, which began in 1769, and ended in 1774 by the peace of Kainardji, was just commencing. Potemkin obtained leave to repair to the army. The Empress particularly recommended him by a letter written with her own hand to General *Romanzoff*, the commander-in-chief of the Russian troops,

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who afterwards obtained the surname of *Zadounaïskoï* for his brilliant passage of the Danube in 1770. Potemkin served under him as adjutant-general.

Romanzoff could not help receiving Potemkin well; but he never gave him his confidence; nor ever employed him on any important service; yet, like a skilful courtier, who foresaw the high favour to which Potemkin might arrive at some future time, he availed himself of his good conduct on several occasions to give the Empress the most splendid account of his zeal and valour. Delighted with any pretence for exalting the object of her secret partiality, Catharine appointed Potemkin a lieutenant-general. This rapid promotion stimulated him to still greater exertions. He hoped to derive from intrigue the means of accomplishing what his courage had so happily commenced.

Being apparently reconciled with the Orloffs, who were yet all-powerful at court, and knowing them to be on bad terms with the field-marshal, Prince Galitzin, under whom he was serving at that time, Potemkin, in his private correspondence with Gregory Orloff, undervalued the services of that estimable general, and censured his operations: but he did not succeed in having him removed from his command. Galitzin kept his situation. Potemkin behaved with carelessness

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during the remainder of the campaign, and no longer sought for opportunities to distinguish himself. It was natural for him suddenly to pass from extreme activity to extreme indolence, and it was not always the want of success which determined such a sudden change.

In the mean time he was informed that the Empress, tired at last of a yoke which love no longer rendered easy, had resolved to get rid of Orloff. He immediately used every possible means of returning to court with the utmost speed, and finding Marshal Romanzoff pretty well disposed to grant him any favour calculated to remove him from the army, he readily obtained of this general the promise of being sent to Petersburgh with dispatches as soon as the troops gained a success of sufficient importance to be announced by a general officer. Potemkin did not know that the Empress had confessed her being completely tired of Orloff to Count Panin, who proposed Vassiltschikoff to supply the place of the discarded favourite. This lieutenant of the guards being young and handsome, was accepted. The Empress appointed him her chamberlain, made him magnificent presents, and treated him even in public with a familiarity that betrayed her satisfaction. Orloff, in the beginning of 1773, retired from Petersburgh, and

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set out upon a journey through various parts of Europe.

The opportunity so ardently desired by Potemkin offered itself at last. Romanzoff, on trusting him with his dispatches for the Empress, requested his patronage at some future time. But Potemkin, who was informed that, after his departure, the Marshal had expressed great satisfaction at being rid of an importunate attendant, vowed him an irreconcilable hatred which lasted as long as his life.

The manner in which he was received by the Empress would have delighted any one but Potemkin, who saw the situation to which he aspired filled by another. The grief of his heart was equal to the disappointment of his ambition. Unable to conceal his regret, he vented it with much artfulness. After having been at first very assiduous in his attendance at court, he on a sudden appeared only very rarely, and with a dejected countenance, an absent mind, speaking little, and in a morose tone; and when he had reached the acmé of despair which he thought capable of moving his sovereign, he absented himself entirely, lived in the most profound retreat, and gave it out that he was determined to shut himself up in a convent. Surprised and angry at Potemkin's seclusion, Catharine made some enquiries, and

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learnt, perhaps with more satisfaction than astonishment, "that an unfortunate and violent passion had reduced him to despair, and that in his sad situation he deemed it prudent to fly the object that caused his torment, since its sight could but aggravate his sufferings, which were already intolerable."

As this account was given to the Empress by persons who had her confidence and that of Potemkin, she readily believed it, and appeared pleased with the idea of inspiring a sentiment that would justify the choice to which her own inclination impelled her. "I cannot comprehend," said Catharine to her confidants, "what can have reduced him to such despair, since I never declared against him. I fancied, on the contrary, that the affability of my reception must have given him to understand that his homage was not displeasing." This declaration was faithfully reported to Potemkin in his retreat. His friends took care to add, that Vassiltschikoff's high favour was merely apparent, and decreasing every day.

Potemkin, however, steady in his plan, retired to the convent of Alexander Newski, situated at one of the extremities of St. Petersburgh, on the banks of the Neva, upon the very spot where Alexander I, czar of Volodimir, gained a great victory over the Swedes, in the thirteenth century, when he was but prince of Novgorod. He

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there took the habit of a monk, and declared his firm resolve to enter into holy orders. This design was constantly lurking in the bottom of his heart, in consequence of his first education. He always mixed practices of a most childish superstition with his ministerial occupations, with the conviviality of entertainments, with the pleasures of love, and with political intrigues. He delayed an important journey, to visit a monastery; dismissed his mistress, to receive a bishop; interrupted an essential conference, to have the mitre of a prelate embroidered with gold and pearls; and was more frequently tempted to become a monk than an emperor. Had not death so quickly put an end to his career, it is probable that he, who wanted to marry the Sovereign of all the Russias, who was ambitious of ascending the throne of Poland, and who aimed at the sovereignty of Courland, would have terminated his life in a cloister.

The farce acted by Potemkin, which the devotees considered as a pious return to heaven, and of which sensible people suspended their judgment, that they might first see how it would end, caused a great sensation both at court and in the town. The Empress was greatly affected. Where is the female that does not feel for the pangs occasioned by the passion she inspires? Catharine thought that so much love was entitled to her

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best efforts to snatch from despair him whom it consumed. She secretly dispatched the countess of Bruce, one of her confidants, to the sorrowing Potemkin, with strict orders to see him, to speak to him, and, without too much committing her dignity, to bring him back to her feet. Success crowned the attempt. Potemkin cast off the cowl, to fly with rapture to the arms of his sovereign. Vassiltschikoff, after having received additional marks of favour, was, at the end of two and twenty months, ordered to repair to Moscow. Orloff, having returned from Revel, and made his appearance at court at this very time, was momentarily restored to favour; and though the Empress secretly cherished in her breast a passion which speedily broke out, she kept for a few days upon good terms with a man, who fancied he engrossed her whole confidence, while, ingenious in disguising her true sentiments, she felt no scruple in deceiving him. Orloff was a second time dismissed, and Potemkin, in 1775, raised to that eminence which he had so long ardently wished to attain.

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CHAP. III.

Potemkin raised to the situation of a favourite, acquires uncommon influence over the mind of Catharine.

No sooner had Potemkin been installed in his new elevated situation, than he considered that the heart of the Empress might prove as inconstant to him as it had been to others. He turned his attention to the means of insuring her favour, in such a degree at least, that if ever the caprices of love should rob him of her heart, they might not strip him either of the fortune or of the power which he derived from her, and which he valued higher than the rest. This bold design demanded superior talents, great address, an artful mixture of apparent submission to the orders of his sovereign, and a real ascendancy over her will. He left no resources unexplored to subdue her mind, afterhaving captivated her heart; and so completely succeeded in the attempt, that Catharine herself frequently expressed her surprise at the influence which Potemkin retained over her resolves, at a time when he had freely resigned the power which love gave him over her sentiments.

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Convinced that a constant adoration almost always becomes fatiguing, Potemkin studied to vary his manner and his behaviour towards Catharine. Skilfully blending attentions with caprices, he sometimes displayed with her the most refined gallantry, and at others carried his rudeness to such an excess, that he did not even vouchsafe an answer when he was spoken to. He availed himself of the first moments of her favour to obtain new dignities, and disguising his ambition under the mask of love, he made the Empress sensible that her glory was interested in insuring, by real titles. a brilliant existence to him who was honoured with her affection. He first caused himself to be appointed a general, which in Russia is the next rank to a field-marshal. This happening soon after peace had been concluded with the Turks, his commission was worded as follows:

"Lieutenant-General Potemkin, having powerfully contributed by his advice to accelerate peace, is appointed General and a Count of the Russian empire; and in consideration of his valour, and of the good and faithful services he has rendered in the course of the last war, Her Majesty presents him with a sword set with diamonds, and with her portrait, which Her Majesty graciously permits him to wear as a distinguished mark of her favour."

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It was, indeed, a very great distinction to wear the portrait of the Empress. No more than four noblemen ever obtained that permission, viz. Gregory, and, after his death, his brother Alexey Orloff, Potemkin, and Zuboff.

One of the first cares of the new favourite was to remove from about the Empress all who had prejudiced him or who might do so at some future time. He left nothing undone to obtain the unlimited confidence of his sovereign, which facilitated the disgrace of his rivals. But his influence in state affairs was yet limited to the suggestions which he ventured in his private intercourse with Catharine. Yet his pretensions in this respect offered already a striking contrast with the unassuming insignificance of his modest predecessor. Like him he occupied in the imperial palace the apartments destined to the favourite, which had an immediate communication with those of the Empress by a private staircase. But often when surrounded by numerous courtiers, he abruptly quitted them to walk up to the Empress in his night-gown, leaving his company in the utmost astonishment. The Empress, on her part, not only tolerated this excessive familiarity, but frequently came down to the favourite in the course of the morning. The effect which this intimacy was calculated to produce upon the courtiers, and how well the crafty Po-

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temkin turned it to his advantage, may easily be imagined. He was, indeed, little less feared and respected than the sovereign. What need had he to use any management with her subjects, when he treated the monarch herself with so little ceremony? His anti-chamber was crowded with a number of individuals whom the advantages of birth, rank and fortune, placed far above him, who were all eagerly watching the moment of paying their respects, and who were not every day admitted to this distinguished favour.

Though haughty with the great, Potemkin was often condescendingly familiar with persons in lower situations of life. Subaltern functionaries frequently availed themselves of his indolence to obtain what the most illustrious persons would not have dared to ask. But sometimes he made merry at the expence of those who were more immediately in his dependance, that they might not fancy they had too much empire over him. His secretary one day laid a wager that he would make him sign a large pile of important papers to which he had repeatedly urged his signature in vain during six months. He accordingly entered the favourite's room with a huge pocket-book full of writings which had cost him much labour. At the end of three hours he triumphantly returned from his cabinet and proclaimed that he had won his bet. But when the writings

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were examined, it was found that, instead of his own, Potemkin had signed every one of the papers with the name of the secretary, who was reluctantly obliged to write them all over a second time, and lost his wager into the bargain.

By persevering in this capricious conduct, which was in perfect unison with his temper and principles, Potemkin maintained his authority and his sway over every rank of society without ever falling himself under the yoke of any individual. He was sure of the affection of the Empress, who at this time loved him without reserve. Her munificence was always ready to grant whatever his ambition could ask. He had long coveted some of the higher offices of the state: but they were all filled by men worthy to hold them. To soothe his disappointment Catharine gave him the rich governorship of Novgorod, which he afterwards resigned for more important dignities. And as she wished to exalt the object of her affection as much as she enriched him, she thought of raising him to the rank of a prince. Yet, as she was not accustomed to confer this rank herself, she wrote with her own hand to Count Galitzin, her ambassador at Vienna, to order him to prefer her request to the emperor, Joseph the Second, pointing out the way in which he was to go about the business in order to succeed.

The emperor assured the ambassador that he

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had but recently refused that dignity to two persons patronized by the Empress his mother: but that wishing to give Catharine the Second a proof of his regard and sincere friendship, he granted her request, and deemed himself happy in bestowing the princely title upon an individual so worthy of it by his merit as Count Potemkin. The ambassador dispatched an extraordinary messenger to his court to be the bearer of this agreeable intelligence, and the diploma by which it was confirmed reached St. Petersburgh soon after the messenger. The Empress caused the new dignity of her favourite to be proclaimed with much pomp all over the empire.

Shortly before her majesty had decorated him with the orders of St. Andrew, founded by Peter I in honour of the Patron of Russia, and of St. Alexander Newsky. He also was presented by Prussia with the order of the Black Eagle, by Denmark with that of the Elephant, and by Sweden with that of the Seraphim. All these courts eagerly complied with the request of the Empress to honour her favourite with the most marked distinctions of their countries. But Potemkin valued things only in proportion to the difficulty of obtaining them. He anxiously wished for the orders of the Garter, of the Golden Fleece, and of the Holy Ghost. In vain did the Empress second his solicitations for these orders.

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The two latter could only be given to Roman Catholics, and the order of the Garter is never bestowed but in England. Even during his campaign against the Turks, Potemkin was still fondly hoping for the order of the Golden Fleece. Among the diamonds which he displayed on his table by way of amusement, in the presence of the Prince de Ligne, there was a magnificent fleece worth one hundred thousand roubles.

About this time Potemkin also succeeded in obtaining the dignity of a lady of the palace for his mother, and that of maids of honour to the Empress for his three nieces, the Misses von Engelhardt. These situations were considered as extremely honourable. The former gave the right of wearing the portrait of the Empress set with diamonds, which remained in the possession of the heirs of the lady of the palace. The portrait only was returned in case of death. The maids of honour, by way of distinction, wore the initial letter of the Empress's name, set and crowned with diamonds. To all these marks of favour the Empress added presents of considerable landed estates, and of large sums of money.

Potemkin was the first of Catharine's favourites that had a settled monthly pension of twelve thousand roubles. On every first day of the month he found that sum upon his dressing-table. Independent of the immense income which he

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enjoyed, his household expences were entirely paid by the Empress. One hundred thousand roubles were annually set down in the expenditure of the court for his table, without reckoning his wine, which he received likewise out of the imperial cellars. The coaches and livery servants of the court were also at his orders, and yet his expences were so excessive, and his income so badly administered, that he was constantly involved in debts. Whenever the load of them proved too oppressive, he used to apply to the Empress, who sometimes expressed her displeasure at the insatiable prodigality of her favourite, but always ended by paying his debts.

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CHAP. IV.

Potemkin resigns his situation of favourite.

For the short space of two years Potemkin had enjoyed this powerful influence over the heart and mind of the Empress, when he thought he might resign the situation of favourite without losing any of the important advantages attached to it, and while he ceased to be her lover, continue to be the friend, the confidant, or indeed almost the ruler of his sovereign. He took his measures accordingly, and prepared for this change with a facility that confirmed what had generally been supposed, that he had taken the situation as he quitted it, namely, from motives of self-interest or from his own free choice. It required, however, more address and talents to relinquish the title of lover, and yet to keep the prerogatives attached to the situation, than to maintain his post. A happy rival, preferred on the score of pleasure, particularly if he should be possessed of boldness and ambition, must always be a formidable competitor. Yet, in spite of this risk, Potemkin completely succeeded in the attempt.

The Empress had recently taken two young secretaries for her private correspondence, Berbo-

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rodko and Zavadowski. The former afterwards acted a conspicuous part in politics. The latter was the son of a clergyman in the Ukraine, and sufficiently handsome to attract the notice of Catharine. He was, besides, a young man devoid of firmness and of energy, better adapted to be the instrument of the passions of others, than to act for himself; rather learned than witty or amiable, and no ways formidable to Potemkin, who, perceiving the dawning partiality of the Empress, had carefully observed him, and found him perfectly proper to answer his end. From that moment Potemkin resolved to urge Zavadowski on, to encourage him, and to use every exertion to have him for his successor.

It was about this time that the Empress made a journey to Moscow to celebrate the peace, and to extinguish the yet remaining embers of the troubles excited by the rebellion of Pugatchef. On this excursion, she was of course attended by Potemkin; but on the road the latter complained of an indisposition which must obviously render him less agreeable to Catharine. After their return to Petersburgh, his complaint of bad health continued; but his attachment to his sovereign, his zeal, his devotedness to her service, seemed to augment in the same ratio with his infirmities, and the more he became useless for her pleasures, the more he rendered himself of essential service

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to her affairs. He at length solicited an interval of rest to recover his health, giving her majesty to understand at the same time that it would be for a short period, at the end of which he hoped to be reinstated in all his rights, which he was more than ever disposed to assert.

He was, however, perfectly aware of the consequences of this step; it was indeed his determination to rest for ever, and not to commit the imprudence of resuming functions, which are never so securely performed when they have been once abandoned. Catharine, who had for some time struggled between love and gratitude, still felt the ascendancy which a favourite, as commendable for his beauty as for the amiability of his mind, had gained over her. Though ever so disposed to make a new choice, she could not determine to declare it formally. She was afraid of afflicting Potemkin, and yet she was already in love with Zavadowski. This young man combined, with a vigorous constitution, a charming figure and blooming health. A kind of simplicity and ignorance of court etiquette, lent him new charms in the eyes of the Empress. The contrast of his ingenuity with the studied manners of her courtiers, became so powerfully attractive, that she had no longer strength to combat her inclination. She secretly wished that Potemkin might not oppose this new sentiment, but be contented

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with her confidence and friendship, while he was losing her affection. This secret desire was the precise point to which Potemkin wished to bring his sovereign.

When he was sure of having attained his end, he did not cease acting his part; but expressed so much sorrow, that Catharine fancied she should never be able to console him in his misfortune. Her bounty showered new favours upon him; and when Zavadowski took possession of the apartments destined for the favourite, Potemkin had another suite of rooms prepared for him in the imperial palace. But to submit in some degree to the custom established with respect to the discarded favourites of Catharine, he left Petersburgh for a short time, and inspected his government with the greatest attention.

On his return to Petersburgh, the Empress presented Potemkin with the palace of Anitchkoff, which she purposely bought for him. Instead of expressing his gratitude for such a magnificent gift, Potemkin appeared dissatisfied with the furniture. Catharine, always obliging and generous, gave him eighty thousand rubles out of her private purse, to furnish it anew according to his taste. He took the money, but did not devote it to the purpose for which it was given. He continued to reside for some time in the imperial palace, and removed at last to an hotel near the

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Hermitage. By means of a covered gallery which communicated with the Hermitage, he could visit his sovereign at any hour without attracting the attention of the public, and also receive her privately. The Empress indeed frequently availed herself of this convenience, to consult him as her adviser on the most important affairs; and she still felt for him a predilection, resulting no doubt from the similarity of their characters and the greatness of their views.

Potemkin having now assumed the part of a friend and confidant, Catharine in a short time confessed to him, without disguise, that she began to be tired of Zavadowski, and wished to give his place to a more amiable object. He proposed the major of a regiment of hussars, named Zoritch; who was immediately accepted. Catharine, satisfied with the appearance, the understanding, and the manners of her new lover, testified her gratitude to Potemkin by a present of one hundred thousand roubles; and Zoritch, on being installed in his new functions, presented him with a similar sum: and this kind of fee to Potemkin for his recommendation was ever after given to him on such occasions, as a matter of course. Even those favourites who were chosen without his knowledge, were anxious to offer the bribe for the sake of insuring his benevolence.

To all these extraordinary emoluments, which

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soon raised Potemkin's fortune much higher than that of many sovereign princes, must be added the considerable donations which Catharine used to make him at certain fixed periods; such as his saint's or his birth's day. These presents were seldom below one hundred thousand roubles: and Potemkin, always audacious and imperious, so well knew how to convert these gratifications into dues to which he laid a rightful claim, that, when once, at the anniversary of his birth, the Empress, being dissatisfied with him, sent him only a tooth-pick-case set with diamonds, worth thirty thousand roubles, instead of a present of one hundred thousand roubles which she had given him the preceding years, Potemkin broke out into the most vehement complaints; and Catharine, to reconcile matters, presented him with the hundred thousand roubles in addition to the trinket: so that the resentment which she had wished to shew, cost her Majesty thirty thousand roubles above what she had been used to give on those occasions.

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CHAP. V.

Potemkin assumes the management of state affairs, and adds the Crimæa to the provinces of the Russian Empire.

The address with which Potemkin contrived to rid himself of the slavish functions of a favourite, and yet to retain all his influence over the mind of his mistress, evinced at once the energy of an ambitious man who boldly rushes onwards to the object of his wishes, and the pliancy of a courtier who neglects no resources of craft and intrigue to further his designs. When he found his fortune and his power firmly established, and saw that he had acquired the consideration which he wanted for his ulterior designs, he applied himself to state affairs, from which he had hitherto generally kept at a distance; and, always of an original turn of mind and enterprising, he distinguished his new career by a system of aggrandisement, of fame and glory, that shed equal brilliancy upon his person and upon the empire. From this period, his history becomes involved in that of his country. But it is due to historical truth to acknowledge that his politics tended more to render Russia conspi-

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cuous than happy; and that, under the influence of his private passions, he either devoted himself to public business with undue activity, or neglected it altogether with culpable indolence, accordingly as it stood in more or less direct relation to his own interests. In short, Potemkin as a statesman was great and surprising, but he was tainted with the vice most prejudicial to society—a vice which shows that a man may be possessed of a vigorous mind, and yet be devoid of magnanimity; his ambition was selfish.

It was about this time (1777) that Potemkin inspired Catharine with the gigantic project of driving the Turks from Europe. The forces and resources of Russia, if well directed, were indeed sufficient for the execution of this arduous enterprise; and the imbecility, ignorance, and improvidence of the Ottoman government, warranted the most sanguine hopes of success. But the capricious temper of the man who planned the undertaking, opposed the most formidable obstacles to its execution: not that his means were ill devised, but, when the time for action arrived, his indolence always caused the best contrived plans to miscarry. Any pleasure that offered would take him off from the most serious affair; the details of his preparations were left to subalterns; his movements were unnecessarily postponed, and the

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favourable opportunity missed. In the midst of his delays, he dissipated the sums he had obtained for the necessary preparations; obstacles were multiplied, the embarrassments of the imperial finances increased, and government saw itself under the cruel necessity of overburthening the nation with excessive imposts, which, after all, were still found insufficient. Russia was even forced to fly to the ruinous resource of creating a paper-money; and immense projects ended in comparatively trifling conquests, which may however enable the successors of Catharine to follow up her plans with better success.

With the view to force the Turks to a new war, the Russian government rendered itself guilty of many infractions of the last treaty of peace. Several cities were built in the government of Azof; among others, Ekatharinoslauf on the frontiers of the Crimæa, Cherson on the Black Sea, and Maninpol; which were fortified, and in which all sorts of ammunition and war implements were collected in large depôts. The Greeks and the Armenians of the Crimæa were openly instigated to emigrate. Numbers of them came to settle in the new towns; and every opportunity of molesting the Turks was eagerly improved.

But when the Ottoman Porte had been provoked to a pitch which rendered war absolutely

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inevitable, Potemkin, by one of his inexplicable whims, seemed anxious to preserve peace, and gladly availed himself of the mediation of the French ambassador to sign a new convention with Turkey; in which concessions were made on both sides, and by which Russia was left at leisure to play the arbiter in the affairs of Europe.

The death of Maximilian Joseph, Elector of Bavaria, had revived the old pretensions of the court of Vienna to that Electorate; and Frederic the Great, king of Prussia, had marched an army of two hundred thousand men into Bohemia, to oppose these pretensions. Potemkin threatened Austria that the Russian troops under prince Repnin should join the Prussian army. A congress met at Teschen, at which Repnin was present in the name of the Empress Catharine, and Count de Breteuil in the name of Louis XVI of France. Peace between Prussia and Austria was signed on the 13th of May, 1779. Both the cabinet of Berlin and that of Vienna now became anxious to form an offensive and defensive alliance with the Empress Catharine the Second; and each of them perceived that, in order to have any chance of success, Potemkin must be brought over to its interest. The difficulty was how to effect this. The degree of power, wealth, and honours, to which he was arrived, seemed to pre-

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clude all possibility of dazzling him by any proposal. It is however supposed that prince Kaunitz, in the name of the Empress Maria Theresa of Germany, ventured to offer him a considerable sum. Frederick, being of a more parsimonious disposition, had recourse to a different bribe. He had secretly been informed that Potemkin had some views upon the duchy of Courland: accordingly he offered him his intercession with the court of Warsaw, to put him in possession of that country, and to indemnify the duke with some estates in Silesia. Potemkin at first was tempted by the magnitude of the bribe; but he had projects of his own that were more flattering, and aimed at creating an independent sovereignty for himself in Greece. He repented, however, having rejected the offer of the king of Prussia, when he considered that, if he had accepted the duchy of Courland, it would have been easy for him, with the help of the troops and money of Russia, to have formed a considerable principality for himself at the expence of Poland, that was quickly declining to a state of absolute imbecility. Potemkin is reported to have repeatedly said to one of his most intimate friends: "Had I accepted the duchy of "Courland, it would not have been difficult for "me to obtain the crown of Poland, since the

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" Empress might have prevailed with the king " to abdicate in my favour, and he would no " doubt have been inclined to do so."

In the mean time, Catharine grew tired of Major Zoritch, her favourite; and, with Potemkin's approbation, she gave his situation to Korzakoff, the most ostentatious of her lovers, whom she loaded with diamonds and presents of all kinds.

But these love intrigues did not prevent Catharine's attending to the political concerns of Europe. At the very moment when England expected the assistance of Russia against her enemies during the American war, Catharine declared her adherence to the famous plan of the armed neutrality, to which almost all the states of Europe successively acceded. Sir James Harris (afterwards Lord Malmesbury), who was then English ambassador at the court of St. Petersburgh, zealously exerted himself with prince Potemkin to induce him to determine the Empress to alter her purpose: but his exertions were baffled by a singular stratagem. He had given a long memorial to Potemkin, who promised to hand it to the Empress, and back it with his recommendation. However, a young female of the name of Guibald, who was about the nieces of prince Potemkin, and lived on a very familiar footing with him, took the paper by stealth out of

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the Prince's pocket, and carried it to her employers. They immediately enriched it with marginal notes, which victoriously opposed all the arguments of the English minister; and the writing was then without discovery returned to the place whence it had been taken. The Empress, on reading the memorial, naturally supposed the notes had been added by Potemkin; which confirmed her determination to maintain the armed neutrality.

Potemkin all this while was at the summit of favour. Every day some new present from the sovereign increased his immense riches; every day some new honour was added to the long list of his dignities. The court, the army, the navy, were all submitted to his control. He appointed the ministers, the generals, the favourites, and removed them at his pleasure; and both his benevolence and his resentment were dictated by his caprice.

With all the outward appearance of a rough and frequently brutal frankness, Potemkin was extremely artful. With an absolute sway over the will of the Empress, he pretended to exist only to serve her Majesty; and while he behaved with insolence to all the great personages of the empire whom he thought he could affront with impunity, he reserved his affability for those whom he knew to possess spirit or cunning.

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Among those who were in his confidence at that time, the notorious English major Semple stood very high. By his advice, Potemkin introduced several new regulations in the army; and, had it not been for some of the Major's own ways and means to obtain money, such as writing threatening letters to the Duchess of Kingston, there is no doubt but he would have been soon raised to the rank of a general officer, or appointed consul at whatever place he chose. Potemkin usually rewarded his favourite counsellors with placing them as consuls in foreign commercial towns. At one time, he had not less than two hundred in different parts of Turkey, the Levant, the islands of the Archipelago, &c. An Irish officer of the name of Newton, who was afterwards guillotined at Paris, enjoyed likewise a considerable share of Potemkin's confidence.

Of those who would not humble themselves before him, there was no one whom he hated more than Marshal Romanzoff: he dreaded his inflexibility as much as he envied his glory. His aversion extended even to Countess Bruce, his sister, one of the most intimate confidants of Catharine. Potemkin anxiously watched for an opportunity to destroy her influence; and it was not long before chance threw one in his way. The Countess had taken a fancy to Korzakoff, the reigning favourite of her mistress. Potemkin

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procured her secret interviews with Korzakoff, not caring to sacrifice his friend, provided the sister of Romanzoff were involved in his fall. The Empress one day surprised the lovers together in her own room; she instantly commanded Korzakoff to travel abroad, and sent the Countess to Moscow.

But the mind of Potemkin was not entirely engrossed by these court intrigues: he vehemently desired to have Catharine crowned at Constantinople; and, as a preparatory step to this grand design, he determined to begin by taking possession of the Crimæa. To insure his success, it was necessary to act in concert with the Emperor of Germany. Catharine, wishing for a conference with Joseph the Second, requested him to come and join her in Poland; and she soon after set out for Mohilef, where she had an interview with him on the 30th of May, 1780.

The two monarchs agreed to attack the Turks in concert; to share the spoils between them; and to re-establish the ancient republics of Greece. But Joseph's counsel was to delay the declaration of war, and he supported his opinion with arguments so convincing, that Catharine and Potemkin, notwithstanding their impatience to proceed to blows, were compelled to yield to the solidity of his reasons. Catharine invited the Emperor to

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visit Russia; and that monarch, always fond of travelling, and eager in pursuit of information, took the road to Moscow; while Catharine returned to St. Petersburgh, where the Emperor arrived some time after, and where the stipulations of their conference at Mohilef were confirmed by a formal treaty.

Not long after the departure of Joseph the Second from Petersburgh, Frederick the Great of Prussia, in order to counterbalance the influence which he suspected the Emperor to have acquired during his stay at the court of Catharine, sent his nephew the crown-prince of Prussia (who reigned after him by the name of Frederick William the Second), to pay his respects to the Empress. Entertainments as numerous and as magnificent as had been given to the Emperor, were given to the prince: but from something particular in the attentions shown to the former, it was easy to perceive what a different interest was attached to the friendship of the two courts.

During the visits of these two illustrious strangers, the influence of Potemkin over the Empress appeared somewhat diminished; Catharine gave the situation of favourite, vacant by the dismissal of the faithless Korzakoff, to Lanskoï, one of the Chevalier-guards, without consulting Potemkin. Lanskoï was of a very ancient family in Poland, originally called Lonsky, and

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of the most beautiful and interesting figure that imagination can paint. The Chevalier-guards in Russia consist of sixty tall and handsome men, all officers, and holding the rank of captains in the army. Potemkin, their commander, enraged at (what he called) the presumption of Lanskoï to have accepted of his new situation without his consent, continued deaf to his apologies, and could not be prevailed upon to listen to a reconciliation but by means of two hundred thousand roubles, which the friends of Lanskoï advised him to sacrifice, to ward off the dangerous enmity of his superior officer. At this price, Potemkin consented to leave the affections of his sovereign undisturbed; and truly they were deeply engaged. Of all the lovers of Catharine, Lanskoï was the man whom she loved the most, and who best deserved her love.

In the course of the negociations with the court of Vienna, respecting the intended attack upon the Ottoman empire, the Emperor having been informed that the grand-duke Paul Petrovitch was going to visit foreign countries, invited the young prince to begin his travels by the Austrian court, and applied to Potemkin to second his request with the Empress. Catharine readily consented. In the month of September, 1781, the grand-duke and the grand-duchess went through Poland to Vienna, and thence to Italy, France, and Holland,

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whence they returned to St. Petersburgh, through Germany. During their journey, nothing that happened to them was unknown to the Empress. A courier, regularly dispatched every day, informed her where they were, and how they were employed.

It was extremely natural for the travellers to wish, in their turn, to be informed of what was passing at Petersburgh. On leaving home, the grand-duke had requested prince Alexander Kourakin, his most confidential friend, who accompanied him on his travels, to engage some person on whose zeal and veracity he could rely, to maintain a minute correspondence with him. Kourakin applied to the chamberlain, Bibikof, whom he knew to be sincerely attached to the grand-duke. They both were perfectly sensible that the regular conveyance of their letters by the post would not be safe, since not only private letters, but also those addressed to foreign embassadors, were frequently opened at the post-office. They therefore agreed that Bibikof should send his dispatches to the grand-duke by means of private messengers; as they could not suppose that the respect due to the heir of the throne would suffer them to be stopped on the road. They had not yet formed correct notions of the boldness of Potemkin. The very first messenger was intercepted at Riga; and the letters, of which

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he was the bearer, were taken from him. The too confident Bibikof had freely spoken of every thing without reserve, and particularly of Potemkin himself. Incensed at this presumption, Potemkin did not hesitate to have Bibikof arrested and brought before commissioners whom he himself appointed to be his judges. Their verdict was easily foretold: but as the delinquency of which they pronounced Bibikof guilty, was not such as deserved a very severe punishment, they banished him to Astracan; where he died some time after. The despotic Potemkin thought this example sufficient to deter others who might have been tempted to fall into a similar indiscretion; and it is highly probable that the grand-duke did not meet with a single person who had courage to fill the place of the correspondent of whom he was thus deprived.

The mind of Potemkin was about this time occupied with the thoughts of a journey, the issue of which might prove of considerable importance to the interests of the empire. In the councils of Catharine, the question was frequently agitated, to devise means of peopling the provinces which the Turks had ceded to Russia by the treaty of Kainardji. Great sums had already been placed at the disposition of Potemkin for this purpose, but his negligence had always procrastinated the application of the means with

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which he had been supplied, and his prodigality constantly ended in exhausting those means fruitlessly. At length, in 1782, he resumed this project with that ardour which always marked his pursuit of any design the first moment it struck his imagination. He removed to the government of Azof about one hundred families, attracted from divers parts of Germany, and Livonia, the most populous and most flourishing province of the Russian empire. He even sent thither an English farmer, whom the Russian minister at the court of St. James's engaged for him, to make agricultural experiments in those distant countries. These German, Livonian, and English families, were accommodated with materials for building; cattle for their husbandry and private consumption; corn, iron, implements, and whatever was judged necessary to establish such colonies and the manufactures most requisite for their wants. Potemkin spared neither pains nor money to render these new provinces flourishing. If the hopes of the colonists were frequently disappointed; if the brilliant promises with which they had been allured, were often left unperformed, it was the fault of his agents, and not of Potemkin. To convince himself that his orders had been executed, and to examine at the same time the situation of countries which bordered on Turkey, (and, for that very reason, accord-

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ing to the ideas which then occupied the cabinet of St. Petersburgh, were so extremely important,) Potemkin requested and obtained leave of the Empress to visit them himself, and to reside for some time at Cherson, which was then building, and the works of which he accelerated with incredible activity. Catharine, with her wonted generosity, granted him three hundred thousand roubles for this journey; which he began in the month of September, 1782.

No sooner was Potemkin arrived at Cherson, than he forwarded with uncommon ardour the negociations which were already on foot with the several chiefs of the hordes of the Tartars of the Crimea and the Kuban. It was the object of these negociations to engage the Khans of those countries to place themselves of their own accord under the protection of Russia, whose power was already so formidable to them, that it was no great concession on their part to acknowledge the Empress their sovereign. These considerations, added to menaces, promises, bribes, and to the arrival of numerous reinforcements of troops ready to support the demands of Russia under the order of Potemkin, and to give them a new weight, at length determined the chiefs of the Tartar hordes. They promised obedience to Catharine; and Potemkin returned to Petersburgh, with the satisfaction of having obtained, without bloodshed,

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a conquest of the utmost importance for the security and future prosperity of the Russian empire.

Nothing remained but to take legal possession of these provinces, and to render the people that inhabited them, as well as the rest of Europe, sensible of the peremptory motives which had prompted this extraordinary measure. This was done by a manifesto, in the composition of which Potemkin had the greatest share. It stated, that, "The last war against the Ottoman empire having "been attended with the most signal success, the "Empress had certainly acquired the right of "uniting to her empire the Crimea, of which "she was in possession: that, however, she "hesitated not to sacrifice that and many other "conquests to her ardent desire of re-establishing "the public tranquillity, and of confirming the "good understanding and friendship between "her and the Ottoman Porte. That this motive "induced her to stipulate the freedom and in-"dependence of the Tartars, whom she had re-"duced by her arms; hoping to remove for ever "by this means every cause of dissension, and "even of coolness, between Russia and the Sub-"lime Porte, which was too often exposed to "these inconveniences by the form of govern-"ment that then subsisted among the Tartars. "That she had been obliged to interfere with "her troops, to quell several insurrections and

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" revolts, &c. &c. That, the Turks having still " continued to consider the Tartars as subjects of " the Porte, &c. &c., to put an end once for all " to the troubles in the Crimæa, the Empress " unites to her empire the peninsula of the Cri- " mæa, the island of Taman, and all the Kuban, " as a just indemnification for the losses sus- " tained and the expences incurred. That, in " declaring to the inhabitants of those coun- " tries, by the present manifesto, that such " is her imperial pleasure, she promises them, " for her and her successors on the imperial " throne of Russia, that they shall be treated " upon an equality with her ancient subjects; " and that, in taking them under her high pro- " tection, she will defend their persons, their " property, their temples, and the religion they " profess: that they shall enjoy the most absolute " liberty of conscience in the public exercise of " their worship and religious ceremonies; and " that not only the nation in general, but also " each individual in particular, shall participate " in all the advantages enjoyed by her ancient " subjects. But the Empress also expects from " the gratitude of her new subjects, that, touched " with these favours, they will be sensible of the " value of this fortunate revolution, which re- " moves them, from a convulsed state of dis- " turbances and dissensions, to one of entire

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" security and perfect tranquillity, under the " protection of the laws; and that, striving to " imitate the submission, zeal, and fidelity of " those who long have had the happiness of " living under her government, they will render " themselves worthy of her imperial favour, " beneficence, and protection."

This manifesto was published at Petersburgh, on the 8th of April, 1783, on the same day when Potemkin, desirous of achieving his work, set out for the army, after a short stay in the capital. At his arrival at Cherson, he received the homage of the Khan Schaghin-Gheray, the same whom the protection of Russia had caused to be chosen some years before, and who had then sold a sovereignty which did not belong to him. He was promised a pension of two hundred thousand roubles a year, which he did not long enjoy. This unfortunate descendant of Gengis Khan retired to Moldavia, where he was seized by order of the Sublime Porte, conveyed to Rhodes, and strangled.

Being assured of the principal Khan and of most of the other chiefs, Potemkin proclaimed the will of his sovereign, and endeavoured to persuade the inhabitants of these countries, by means of his emissaries, to subject themselves freely to the dominion of Russia. Meanwhile his troops penetrated into the Crimea, along with

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his agents, ready to support their pressing solicitations, and to achieve by force what their seductive means could not accomplish. Such means, indeed, must always prove infallible. The inhabitants of the Crimea took the oath of allegiance to the Empress; and the fortunate Potemkin hastened to inform his sovereign that a free and spontaneous determination had brought to her feet hordes hitherto unsubdued, and had made her queen of Taurida.

It is in fact astonishing, that no European power opposed this easy conquest. Catharine thanked Joseph the Second in particular for the indifference with which he witnessed the transaction; nor had she less reason to be satisfied with the French government. Her Majesty accordingly presented Mr. de St. Priest, ambassador of France at Constantinople, with the order of St. Andrew; the star of which was enriched with magnificent diamonds.

But although his plans of usurpation had so far prospered beyond his wishes, the flattering compliments with which Potemkin had caressed the Empress, were unfortunately contradicted by the events that followed. As soon as the Russian troops were partly withdrawn from the country, several of the subaltern chiefs of the Tartars, who had not shared the bribes of the principal Khans, and who were indignant at seeing themselves

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under the dominion of Russia, leagued together, and agreed to shake off the yoke, and rather to fall under the sway of the Turks than under that of Russians and Christians. An insurrection broke out in the Crimea: but Potemkin was not the man who would thus relinquish his work to the discretion of a few rebels. It was not long before he learnt, at Petersburgh, what was going forward. He immediately wrote to General Paul Potemkin, his cousin, on whose attachment, activity, and vigorous zeal he could depend, to subdue the Tartars. He gave him full powers to act as he liked, and placed numerous troops at his disposition. The General acquitted himself of his commission as well as his cousin had foreseen; and but too well in the eyes of humanity, if every thing that has been reported about this expedition may be credited. He dispersed the rebels, took many of them prisoners, and caused a great number of Tartars of all ranks and ages to be executed. To escape the certain punishment which awaited them, thousands fled the country. These terrible measures consolidated the possession of the Crimea in the hands of the Russians; but they reigned over scarcely half of the population which the peninsula contained before the conquest.

This was, no doubt, a deplorable and frightful effect of ambition: but the moralist, who sits in

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judgment over the actions of statesmen, rarely witnesses any other. Yet, if we look to the further consequences, and carry our views into futurity, to try, by a more extensive scale and in its most distant bearings, the service which Potemkin rendered to his country by the conquest of the Crimæa, we shall be forced to agree, that never did any subject deserve better of his sovereign, or any individual of his countrymen. If henceforwards Russia be safe against any attacks in the East and South; if her finest provinces may securely cultivate in peace the precious gifts which nature has lavished upon them; if population, manufactures, and commerce, may there flourish in safety; if the shores of the Black Sea behold her flag triumphantly ruling the waves; if Constantinople, trembling before her, be sooner or later doomed to acknowledge her laws; if the delicious continent of Asia, the fertile Georgia, the still more beautiful, more varied, and more wealthy Persia, ever become her tributaries or her provinces, Russia will be indebted for these immense advantages to Potemkin, who, by the annexation of the Crimæa, secured her against the inroads of the Tartars; and while he delivered her from her greatest plague and her most formidable enemy, gave her a position singularly favourable to extend alike her power and her navigation.

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Much has been said of the massacres and executions which he caused to take place in the Crimæa, in order to subdue the Tartars, who could not be reconciled to their new yoke: but the accounts of these barbarities have, no doubt, been very much magnified. When we see a man so despotic, so violent, and so arbitrary, and who had so extensive a power as Potemkin, employing gentle, artful, and conciliating means to effect the changes which he meditated; that circumstance alone proves that he was not fond of shedding blood. It rested with him to shed it: if he spared it on that occasion, why should he have lavished it, or permitted it to be lavished, afterwards? Is it not more than probable, that he caused that blood only to flow, which, unfortunately, was absolutely necessary to the preservation of his conquest?

The emigration of the Tartars has likewise been greatly exaggerated. Some inconstant, uneasy, and superstitious hordes, always ready to wander, fearing to be molested in their religion, fled at first, it is true, in considerable numbers, from their country. But will such a desertion bear any comparison with the emigration of Englishmen, Germans, or Frenchmen? It requires cruel persecutions to make a proprietor, a cultivator of the soil, or a tradesman, the member of a civilised community, and accustomed to

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enjoy its sweets, leave his home; while a trifling uneasiness, a little weariness and disgust, will suddenly drive a Tartar a thousand miles from his habitation. Europe besides was struck with the emigration from the Crimea, because it took place in a mass; and no attention has been paid to the incessant return of numbers of families, who, seeing that their country was far from having been doomed to misery, crowded back to it one after the other.

Attempts have also been made to ridicule the first foundations of the towns and colonies established by Potemkin in the governments of Asof and in the Crimea. But though it were true, that, in their origin, these establishments were as insignificant as they have been described; is it possible, on such occasions, to do every thing at once? nay more, is it possible to do any thing in this way with rapidity? There is not an enlightened and considerate individual but who knows the contrary: yet such establishments are not the less entitled to our admiration. The seeds of plants open, bud, and grow very different from what they were when committed to the ground: and is not our gratitude still due to the hand by which they were sown? Time, besides, has justified our observations. Listen only to the travellers who have seen Cherson and Odessa, and particularly the latter town, since a French

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nobleman (the Duke de Richelieu) of the most distinguished merit, who has chosen Russia for his adopted country, has been entrusted with the administration and the prosperity of this important government.

Potemkin here shows himself in a light very different from what he appeared in the first period of his life. It is true that this whimsical being, a compound of so many valuable qualities and great vices, was pompous, prodigal, vain, despotic, insolent; that he spared no one, not even his sovereign; that he gave himself up to excesses, which, owing to the strength of his constitution, became as it were his habitual way of life; that he sometimes neglected important state affairs, to abandon himself to the most culpable indolence: but what an elevation of soul, what energy, what a compass of idea, what an activity did he display when there was something grand to be achieved! How ardently he loved his sovereign, while her glory was so dear to him! how sincerely he was attached to his country, which he strove to render illustrious and formidable! Potemkin was born for an exalted station. He wanted to be a master; and the moment he became so, he performed great things; his mind conceived still greater plans; and it is perhaps owing more to his education and to the vices of his country, than to the imperfections of his character

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and understanding, that he was prevented executing them. His genius pleased Catharine, and was in every respect conformable to the genius of that astonishing Princess. This was the source of his constant influence over her: we must not look for it in the intrigues which Potemkin contrived and conducted, merely as accessary means or as pastimes, and which had their origin rather in the whimsicality of his humour, than in the belief that they might prove useful to his fortune.

CHAP. VI.

Potemkin uses all possible means to bring about a war with the Turks, and to insure its success. —He is named President of the Council of War.

Aware that the taking possession of the Crimea by means as illegal as those which had been employed, could not fail to determine the Turks to war, Potemkin thought it high time to resume, with a renovated activity, the negociations with the court of Vienna that had been suspended, and to conclude at length the treaty of an offensive and defensive alliance, which, while it

insured the execution of the project of driving the Turks from Europe, was also to insure to the two acting powers an immense share of that magnificent prize. Russia, to determine Joseph the Second, did not hesitate to promise that she would favour with all her might his projected exchange with Bavaria, and assist the election of his nephew to the dignity of king of the Romans. At this price, the alliance was soon formed and the treaty signed, to the satisfaction of both parties. The news of this alliance was made public in a manner calculated to mislead the Sublime Porte; which must, however, easily have guessed that it was much concerned in the treaty.

At the moment when Russia was preparing for a war which would employ all her forces, it was important for her to be safe against an enemy less formidable by his power, than by his proximity, his courage, and his pretensions. Potemkin, who foresaw what she had to fear from the king of Sweden, and from an invasion which would threaten the capital itself, wrote from the army to the Empress, to leave nothing undone to insure the tranquillity of that ambitious and enterprising neighbour.

Catharine, who felt the truth of this advice, thought that an interview with the king of Sweden would be the best means of keeping on good terms with that monarch. She wrote to him,

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that, as she intended to visit her province of Finland, she would with pleasure push her journey to the frontiers of Sweden; and requested him to meet her there, to treat directly with her about their mutual affairs. She fixed upon Fredericksham as the place most proper for an interview.

The Empress appears to have been ignorant that she had been anticipated in that quarter by the Sublime Porte, which not only had made Gustavus sensible of the interest he might have in crossing the enterprises and preventing the aggrandisement of Russia, but had also reminded him of the subsidies he received from France on the express condition of assisting that power or its allies in case of a war with Russia.

Gustavus III. did not want these considerations, to behold with regret the ambitious projects of his formidable neighbour; and if he could not obstruct, he had at least no inclination to favour them. Not to be solicited in a manner opposite to his secret sentiments, he endeavoured to elude the invitation of Catharine, under the very plausible pretence of a rather serious accident which he had just met with. He had indeed broken one of his arms, and informed the Empress, that being unable to move, he was sorry to be under the necessity of declining her invitation. This would not satisfy Catharine: the obstacles which Gustavus laid in the way of an interview with her,

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irritated her anxiety to effect it. She wrote to the Swedish monarch, that, since he could not come to Fredericksham, she would go to see him at Stockholm. This offer left no alternative to the king. To receive the Empress in the capital of Sweden, would have led him to an expence ten times more considerable than that of a journey to meet her. He hastened to Fredericksham with his arm in a sling. Three days, passed in uninterrupted conferences, were sufficient for Catharine to make Gustavus forget alike the representations of the Ottoman Porte and his engagements with the court of France; though the latter were backed by subsidies. He promised to comply with the wishes of the Empress, and to observe an exact neutrality during any war she might be engaged in, with any power whatever.

In the mean time, Potemkin, confident that the Empress would succeed in her negociation, provoked the Turks by demanding of the Ottoman ministers the definitive conclusion of the Treaty of Commerce, which had been mentioned in 1779. In the present situation of affairs, and after the invasion of the Crimæa, it could not be expected that the Sublime Porte should be disposed to concede new advantages to the Russians: this demand was therefore evidently nothing but a pretence to sound the Divan, and discover its intentions. The Turks, however, made

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use of a moderation which was absolutely unexpected, and, actuated either by fear, weakness, or fidelity to their engagements, they consented to the treaty.

This commercial treaty, as may easily be supposed, was entirely to the advantage of Russia. The ignorance of the Turks in commercial matters made them leave the settling of the articles of this treaty to strangers, whom the sums lavished by Potemkin rendered completely subservient to his views. Of eighty-one articles, every one almost was favourable to Russia, and prejudicial to the Turks, who, in regard to the trade and navigation of the Black Sea and the Archipelago, conceded to their rivals the same privileges which they granted to their most ancient friends and allies. Russia thus acquired new weapons for the aggressions and provocations which she was seriously determined to continue against the Turks, and which were finally to lead to an open rupture.

The zeal of Potemkin to increase every day the dominion and influence of his country, suffered no abatement. It has been said, that while he apparently exerted himself so zealously for Russia, it was in fact for himself that he acted, and that he aimed at establishing an independent sovereignty for himself, which was to extend from the Crimea to the foot of the Caucasus. This

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circumstance may well be doubted. Supposing even that such a project had once crossed his thoughts, no ostensible and positive step in his whole life can be quoted that had the smallest tendency to realize his design. But be this as it may, he spared nothing to remove the limits of the Russian empire as far as that famous chain of mountains, the extent and inaccessible heights of which were to strengthen it with a natural boundary; and he partly succeeded in the attempt. He was sure of most of the nations that dwell between the Caspian and the Black Seas. The Lesghis alone, a deceitful and savage people, that could not be induced to enter into any negociation, opposed a serious obstacle. He resolved to reduce them by famine. This project was, no doubt, cruel, but of easy execution. It was also necessary that he should gain over the inhabitants of the Imiretto, of Kartalinia, and some others. He had recourse to the most brilliant promises and most magnificent presents to induce them to submit. He set forth the tranquillity which they would enjoy, particularly on account of the conformity of their religion; as these nations are all, like the Russians, of the Greek church. However, he met with complete success only with Heraclius, Prince of Kartalinia, who, after a long resistance, consented to do homage to Russia. It was General Paul Potem-

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kin who, under the direction of his cousin, terminated this important affair. The Empress received the deed of the submission of this Tartar chief as a fresh mark of gallantry on the part of Prince Potemkin; and she sent to Heraclius the decorations of the order of St. Andrew, set with magnificent diamonds. Under Alexander the First, those different principalities, and the whole of Georgia, even beyond the Caucasus, were united with the Russian empire, and assimilated to the rest of the provinces.

Every day Potemkin was sending his emissaries to a greater distance. He even carried his intrigues as far as Egypt, whither he dispatched commissaries with orders to scatter about money and promises, and to neglect no means of fomenting a spirit of revolt. He probably intended to open some new source of commerce with that country: but his principal object was, undoubtedly, to create fresh embarrassments to the Turks, and in case of a rupture, which appeared inevitable, to divide and weaken their forces by obliging them to keep troops in Egypt to restrain the insurgents. The Divan perceived his intrigues, and guessed at their true motives, but continued to dissemble. In the mean time, wise precautions were taken, which prevented the rising discontents of Egypt from breaking out into a general fermentation.

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Potemkin is likewise reported to have attempted at this very time to induce the Hospodars of Moldavia and Wallachia to acknowledge themselves tributaries of the Russian empire; and it is said that the Empress had promised Potemkin the amount of the tribute, and the dignity of a prince of Moldavia and Wallachia, if he succeeded in subduing the chiefs of these countries. It would indeed have been more consonant with the interest and with the ulterior views of the Empress, that these two important provinces, the keys of the European part of the Ottoman empire, should belong to one of her subjects, rather than continue in the hands of alien princes, who were accustomed to consider themselves as independent. Swayed by such motives, Catharine might perhaps have consented to erect for Potemkin this independent sovereignty; but the negociations which Potemkin commenced for this purpose met with no success. Joseph the Second, who, in the projected partition of the Turkish dominions, was naturally to have Moldavia and Wallachia for his share, expressed some displeasure at the attempt to rob him of this hope; and Potemkin, who had powerful inducements not to offend this monarch, relinquished his design and his pretensions.

After success had crowned his enterprise upon the Crimæa, and after his address, his persever-

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rance, and his activity, had united numerous provinces to the empire, it was natural for the Empress to be desirous of expressing her satisfaction and gratitude to the man who was at once her prime minister and the commander of her armies. But Potemkin had reached such a height of grandeur and power, that it was difficult to find any thing that could add to his elevation. The rank of field-marshal was however yet wanting to his glory. Catharine had hitherto resisted the wish of conferring it upon Potemkin, to guard him against the shafts of envy. Several competitors could urge claims equal, and in a military point of view, even superior to those of Potemkin. Count Peter Panin had taken Bender in the first Turkish war, and quelled the revolt of Pugatschef; Alexey Orloff had burnt the Turkish fleet at Tschesme; and Prince Repnin had equally distinguished himself in war and in politics. But the exploits of Potemkin were more recent, and his conquests shed over Russia a splendour which struck every eye. Catharine thought she was reconciling justice with her inclination if she preferred Potemkin to his rivals. However, that she might not offend them, she appointed Prince Potemkin president of the council of war; which situation gave him the rank of a field-marshal. To this favour she added that of naming him governor-general of the Crimæa and the other

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conquered provinces, which formed together a government by the ancient name of the *Taurida*. As Potemkin was already governor of Azoff and Astrachan, he thus united under his direction, or rather, agreeably to his character, under his dominion, an extent of country more considerable than is possessed by many crowned heads in Europe.

But, being anxious to increase his power still more, Potemkin represented to the Empress, that nations recently subdued, and of a restless disposition, required a formidable body of troops to keep them in submission. He accordingly obtained that his army should be considerably augmented; and having, as president of the council of war, the advantage of selecting the best regiments, he formed his division from the flower of the Russian troops.

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CHAP. VII.

Potemkin effects great changes in the organisation of the Russian army, and vainly opposes the league of the Princes of the German empire.

If, hitherto, Potemkin's influence had been restrained as well as divided, it now became so absolute and entire, that the destiny of his country was completely in his hands. The instant he became president of the council of war, he disposed at his will of the forces of the empire, and assumed the sole and absolute management of whatever related to the troops. If he could not command every army, he influenced the inclination of every general; and, from the manner in which he equipped or victualled the respective divisions of the army, this influence extended to their operations. His talents in the administrative department of an army were undoubtedly as great as in active warfare: but his operations in this department were also tainted by his vices; and these vices were frequently the source of disorder, confusion, and depredations, which any other chief would have either prevented or avoided.

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His despotic humour, for instance, and his pride hindered his listening to any advice. He made regulations and introduced new laws, without inquiring how far they were convenient; without considering how far their execution was connected with difficulties. It must however be acknowledged that, if his restless activity suggested at times changes of trifling utility, such innovations regarded only minutiæ; but that the alterations which he introduced in the essential and fundamental system of the army, were excellent and peculiarly adapted to the character of his nation. Potemkin's judgement was too exquisite to fail him in any important point. To appreciate his operations, we must examine the military establishment of Russia in 1784, when he assumed its administration.

It appears, from the most accurate lists which we have been able to procure, that the regular infantry at that time consisted of two hundred and forty thousand men, including the regiments of guards; and the cavalry of thirty-five thousand men, which bear no proportion to the infantry. But as the irregular troops, raised only in time of war, whose number cannot be ascertained, are chiefly composed of light-horsemen, such as Cossacks, &c., the proportion was restored, and Russia, with thirty-five thousand regular horsemen, was then on a par with all the great powers of Europe.

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The regular troops were still extremely deficient with regard to clothes and equipment; and it may easily be supposed, that the Russians, who had begun to be civilised much later than the other nations of Europe, were likewise slower in approximating the forms generally adopted in our days with respect to military dress and costume. Potemkin introduced improvements, which not only gave the Russian soldiery a better appearance, corresponding with the character of the Russians, and calculated to please them; but which, in a military point of view, promoted the health of the soldiers and facilitated their marches and evolutions. He ordered their hair to be cropped; and by that means saved them a troublesome care, and a wasting of time which could be applied to something more useful. He gave them coats with very short laps, pantaloons, and half-boots, which, by leaving more play to the limbs, rendered the motions of the soldiers more free and easy, and their appearance altogether more uniform. To protect them against the inclemency of the weather on marches and guards, he provided them with great-coats, or cloaks, of a more convenient shape than those of their ancient national costume. He armed them with firelocks of less weight; and in this respect, as well as with regard to the formation of different corps, he nearly copied the usages of France.

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The Russian army received almost the same organization as had been introduced in the French army by Count St. Germain, in 1776. Potemkin also increased the number of the troops.

These innovations were undoubtedly advantageous, if we consider them in a military point of view, which places the prosperity of empires in the preponderance they acquire by force. To these different improvements in dress, arms, organization, and tactics, the Russian troops add those military virtues by which they always were distinguished; the habit of a hard and frugal life, the readiness to bear fatigues of all kind with as much cheerfulness as constancy, a severe discipline, an unshaken fortitude both in offensive and defensive operations, an heroic courage, an exemplary patience under sufferings, and the contempt of death. Combining the most precious natural qualities with whatever strength and consistency art is enabled to superadd, the Russian troops became truly formidable, and seemed to threaten Europe with a superiority dangerous to other powers.

At this period, they only wanted to establish this superiority in an undisputed manner over the Turks. Though it was difficult to obtain an authentic cession, yet the conquerors were sensible of its importance to insure the tranquil possession of the provinces they had invaded. It was the

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constant policy of Catharine to induce the princes whose possessions she intended to invade, to resign them themselves; and she never failed to shew excellent reasons for their doing so. The lesson has been remembered, and her policy imitated. It is worthy of the present age, since it favours selfishness and want of honour. If conquerors formerly decided every thing by open force, they did not carry their refinement so far as to wish to hold in the same hand the palm of triumph and the sword of justice.

Potemkin solicited the Porte to acknowledge the Crimæa as a Russian province; and the facility with which this request was acceded to, would be truly amazing, were it not known that France persuaded the Turks to comply, because, being involved in a maritime war with England, this power did not wish to have any allies to support in the East, and was anxious to keep on good terms with Russia, on account of the armed neutrality.

Although Potemkin appeared to have tied his hands up by obtaining his request, and to have placed himself under the necessity of renouncing his grand projects, he yet harboured in the secrecy of his heart more than one subterfuge to break with the Sublime Porte. He felt that the empire stood in need of rest. It was highly necessary to consolidate and to re-people the newly con-

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quered provinces, since, independent of a considerable diminution in the number of inhabitants, occasioned by the war and frequent emigrations, the Russians, in order to put an end to the restlessness by which the Tartars were continually actuated, had been under the necessity of transplanting above forty thousand of them in other governments. Catharine thought she could not confide the care of repairing these losses to better hands than those of the able and fortunate statesman who had added those fine provinces to her empire. She gave full powers to Potemkin, and placed three millions of roubles at his disposal, to begin useful establishments in the Crimæa, to build towns and villages better adapted for an agricultural people than those of the Tartars, to organise a proper magistracy and police, and to introduce, in short, a kind of civilisation calculated to render that country happy and prosperous.

The Empress bestowed upon Potemkin a gratification of one hundred thousand roubles for the treaty he had concluded with the Porte: at least, the imperial ukase, which awarded him that sum, mentioned no more. But it was Catharine's constant practice to conceal part of the sums which she so profusely lavished upon certain individuals. When we recollect the important gratifications which had been given to Potemkin on less im-

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portant occasions, it is difficult to suppose that the generosity of the Empress should have been so limited on this; particularly as it is generally known, that in this very year (1784) he purchased landed estates in Russia, to the amount of four hundred and fifty thousand roubles; and, what surprised every one, he paid the money down for this purchase. He also acquired about this time part of the rich domains which the Princes Lubomirsky and Sapieha had possessed in Podolia and Lithuania. His enemies thought he was providing for a retreat into Poland: but whatever were his intentions, never did his favour appear so firmly established; never had he been attached to his country by so many titles and dignities. The Empress honoured him with the surname of *Tauritschesky* (the Taurian); gave him the government of the Taurida, with the rank of Grand-Admiral of the Euxine; and built for him a magnificent hotel at Petersburgh, which was called the Taurida Palace. "The grand front of "this building," says Sir John Carr, "is of brick, "stuccoed white. It is situated in the east end "of the city; the centre is adorned with a por- "tico supported by columns, and has a large "cupola of copper and extensive wings. A "variety of out-offices, orangeries, and hot- "houses, reach from the left wing to a prodigious "distance. In the front is a court-yard, divided

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"from the street by a handsome railing. The "building is extensive, but low; and although "it has a princely appearance, it does not excite "the admiration which a stranger feels on enter- "ing it. The kitchen, fruit, and pleasure gardens "occupy a vast space of ground, watered by "several canals; over one of which is a flying "covered bridge of one arch, which an obscure "illiterate Russian constructed for the purpose "of connecting the two sides of the Neva, "opposite to the statue of Peter the Great."

The wealth of Potemkin has never been ascertained. He in fact had the imperial treasure itself at his disposal. The Rev. Wm. Tooke states, that in the first two years he received about nine millions of roubles; that he afterwards accumulated immense riches; that one of his book-cases was full of gold, diamonds, and notes of several banks; and that his whole fortune was estimated at fifty millions of roubles. Others state it at sixteen, some at nine, and some at forty millions. But if we judge of his fortune by his expences, it must have been much more considerable. His expenditure was, indeed, that of a rich sovereign. Independent of the presents with which the Empress loaded him, he had the revenue of his numerous dignities, the gratifications given him by foreign courts on the signature of any important diplomatic treaty, and the

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bribes he exacted from the favourites. His controlls must also have been immense, since he possessed not less than forty-five thousand peasants. He was however of a very avaricious disposition: he even frequently refused to pay his tradesmen. A celebrated French veterinary professor went from Vienna to Petersburgh, for the purpose of curing a beautiful horse that had been presented to Potemkin by the Emperor Joseph the Second, and which was so ill that it had been given over by the profession at Petersburgh. The French professor built a stable for the animal upon a particular construction, and by the most incessant attention succeeded in restoring it to health. When the horse-doctor waited upon Potemkin with the joyful news, and expected to be profusely rewarded, he was refused admittance,—never could see him afterwards, and never was paid. Yet, notwithstanding these occasional acts of avaricious dishonesty, his prodigality in some cases was such that he was frequently embarrassed. Having given orders for the most extravagant preparations for an entertainment, the persons employed ventured to hint at the enormous sums which they would cost. "What, sir," said Potemkin, "do you pretend to know the depth "of my treasury?"—and his orders were obeyed.

Although Potemkin had been offended at Lanskoi's accepting the situation of a favourite

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without his concurrence, yet he never had any reason to doubt his attachment to him. The education of Lanskoï had been much neglected: Catharine took the care of it upon herself. She adorned his mind with useful knowledge, and he soon became as distinguished for his acquirements and the elegance of his manners, as he was by the beauty and gracefulness of his person. The love which the Empress bore to this amiable young man was ardent and sincere: she admired in him her own creation. But her happiness was not of long continuance: Lanskoï was attacked with a violent fever, and died in the arms of her Majesty, who lavished upon him to the last moment the most endearing appellations which the most passionate tenderness can inspire. When he was no more, Catharine ordered herself to be put to bed, indifferent to life or death; and giving herself up to the most poignant grief, she refused all sustenance for several days, and remained three months shut up in her palace. Potemkin took upon himself to dispel the grief of Catharine. He was the only person who could presume to penetrate the solitude in which she passed her hours. His influence at length recalled her to the cares of her empire; and, whether from gratitude, or from real attachment, the Empress is reported to have secretly bound him to her by indissoluble ties. But is it to be credited that the bold, the

ambitious, the haughty, the despotic Potemkin, on becoming her husband, should have made no use of the ascendancy which this most striking proof of affection and weakness gave him over her? that there should not have been any change in his conduct? that he should not have availed himself of his rights; and that he should, on the contrary, have hastened to choose her a new favourite? Besides, since the death of Catharine, and under the reign of her son Paul, the greatest enemy to her memory, the fact of this pretended secret marriage would have been known, if ever it had taken place.

After Potemkin had succeeded in rousing the Empress from the profound melancholy in which she had been so long absorbed, all who had any ambition at court, were desirous of seeing the place, vacant by the premature death of Lanskoï, filled by some one who would allow them to share in the favours dependent on the situation. Princess Dashkoff endeavoured to obtain it for her son; and success for a moment seemed to attend her intrigues.

Prince Dashkoff was a tall, handsome young man, well-shaped, and of a figure adapted to make some impression upon the heart of the Empress. Potemkin, aware of these designs, carefully avoided any show of opposition; contradiction, he thought, would only have served

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as a stimulant. He, on the contrary, feigned to favour young Dashkoff; while he secretly acquainted Catharine with every petty failing both in the Princess Dashkoff and her son, not omitting to exaggerate and put his own constructions upon each. No one was better skilled in the art of mimicking the defects of others. The Empress laughed heartily at his mimickry; and the next day Potemkin sent to her, one after another, Yermoloff and Momonoff, two lieutenants of the horse-guards, with some trifling commission, to give her an opportunity to see these young men. Catharine decided in favour of Yermoloff.

At a ball that was given at court, Prince Dashkoff displayed uncommon magnificence. The courtiers now imagined his triumph at hand, when they saw Potemkin particularly attentive to his mother. Delighted with his attentions, Princess Dashkoff, on the following day, wrote to Potemkin, to request him to name her nephew, the young count Butturlin, one of his aides-de-camp. Potemkin sarcastically answered, that their number was full, the last vacancy having just been supplied by lieutenant Yermoloff. This name, as well as the person who bore it, were alike unknown to the Princess: but that very day she became acquainted with them both, on perceiving Yermoloff at the Hermitage, attending the Empress.

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As soon as Potemkin witnessed the return of Catharine's accustomed cheerfulness, he resumed the affairs of the empire with renovated activity. The protection of the newly conquered provinces became his peculiar care. He felt, above all, the necessity of defending the Kuban against the continual inroads of the neighbouring Tartars, who were not yet subdued. In vain were these courageous and restless hordes repulsed by the superior discipline of the Russian troops; they constantly rallied and returned with fresh fury to plunder the unfortunate provinces which had acknowledged the dominion of Russia. Forty thousand Russian troops, distributed over that frontier, could scarcely control those savage hordes, which, from the very nature of their attacks, in small separate bands, never ran the risk of losing many men at once; they fled with rapidity to their inaccessible mountains whenever their enterprises miscarried; and there, safe from harm, leisurely gathered reinforcements, and prepared for new incursions. To these repeated combats, which caused the Russian troops to suffer prodigiously, must be added the length of their marches, the difficulty of the roads, the variations of climate, and, lastly, the mal-practices of the commissaries or officers charged with the subsistence and maintenance of the troops, to be enabled to form some idea of the frightful

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diminution which the conquest of the countries near the Caucasus occasioned in the ranks of the Russian army: and yet the only remedy to this dreadful evil was to push these conquests still farther; to take possession of the country beyond the Caucasus; to place that chain of mountains in the Russian territory for the purpose of giving it a natural boundary, and to deprive its formidable enemies of their only remaining asylum. Potemkin, aware of the necessity of this measure, directed all his cares to keep a strong army on that frontier. He seconded his military operations with all the arts that policy could suggest to win the Tartar chiefs by bribes, and to sow divisions among them.

The affairs of Germany, in the mean time, attracted the attention of the court of Russia. The emperor, Joseph the Second, being informed that the league of the German princes was going to be signed at Berlin, and afraid of a rupture with Prussia, applied to Catharine to claim either the succour stipulated by the last treaty, or her mediation, to prevent a league so prejudicial to his interests as chief of the empire of Germany. The cabinet of Petersburgh had probably witnessed with indifference, perhaps even with pleasure, the project of a league calculated to keep under control a neighbour, of whose active and enterprising character it was afraid. However, it

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could not decently refuse its intercession and good offices; it accordingly began to employ itself with an apparently active zeal to prevent the league intended by the princes of the Germanic body. Potemkin, by doing on this occasion what policy required, was also gratifying his own private inclination. Being of an imperious and arbitrary disposition, he despised the forms of the Germanic constitution, which he thought extremely ridiculous. As his brilliant imagination frequently enlivened his conversation with striking comparisons, he used to call the German empire *an archipelago of princes*. The ministers of Russia who resided in the little courts of Germany, employed by turns the resources of an insinuating and an overbearing policy: but their efforts proved vain. Supported by Prussia, and feeling themselves sufficiently strong not to fear Austria, the German princes thought they had nothing to dread from the Russian empire. They continued steady in their resolution; and the league was concluded. The cabinet of St. Petersburgh, on seeing its efforts to counteract this alliance disappointed, expressed its dissatisfaction by a long declamatory memorial, which was read at the diet of Ratisbon. It did not produce the smallest effect; but it served at least to justify the Empress in the eyes of the court of Vienna, as it evinced her endeavours and those of her

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ministers to support the interests of the Emperor of Germany, and to shew herself his faithful ally.

This momentary diversion from the affairs of the interior to meddle with those of Europe having produced no satisfactory effect, Potemkin soon forgot a trifling disappointment (which could scarcely be called a disappointment to either his vanity or that of his sovereign), and returned to an object which he had much nearer at heart, and in which his glory was more particularly concerned. He had resolved to place the Russian army on a regular footing, and considerably to increase its strength by introducing order and economy into its interior administration. He published about this time (1786) a regulation that fixed the expenditure of the army in every particular; such as the pay of general officers and others, that of the soldiers, the clothing and maintenance of the army in every respect, the cost of arms and equipments, the salary of the workmen who follow in the train of the army, the price of the materials necessary for their different labours, and the cost-price and food of the horses. Every thing was settled by this regulation, which also fixed the time that each article, either for the use of individuals or of whole corps, was to last. One hundred and eighty-six thousand roubles were allowed for a regiment of infantry

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of four battalions; one hundred and sixty-one thousand roubles for a regiment of cuirassiers of six squadrons; and about one hundred thousand roubles for a regiment of light-horsemen.

CHAP. VIII.

Potemkin defeats the plots formed against him.

The uncommon attention which Potemkin bestowed upon state affairs did not absorb all his time. His moments of leisure were devoted to his private interests. He had long been desirous of augmenting the income he derived from some landed estates near Mohilef, the capital of White Russia, of which he was governor. He perceived that one of the means best calculated to encourage population and industry in those still desert and uncultivated regions, was to establish manufactures, and to work the raw produce of that naturally fertile country, so as to render it an object of exchange which would attract the merchandizes of the neighbouring provinces. But as the advantages which were to accrue from these establishments would be as beneficial to government as to himself, he thought he might place the advances which they required to the account of

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the imperial treasury; and published, in the name of his sovereign, a proclamation, by which he invited strangers from all countries to carry their industry and activity to the Russian provinces situated between the banks of the Dnieper and the foot of the Caucasus; promising to those who would attempt to cultivate those fertile lands considerable advances to begin their labours, and privileges calculated to insure to them the enjoyment of their industry, and to indemnify them for the difficulty of the first attempt. The Russian ministers in foreign courts, to whom these proclamations were sent, entered with so much ardour into his views, that great numbers of Germans, Swiss, and even subjects of Austria and Prussia, emigrated to Russia. Potemkin had taken care to have their rout prescribed on their passports; and as they were all to pass through Mohilef, he retained a considerable number of these emigrants for his own estates. This injustice, which was not prejudicial to the general object in view, and did not essentially contradict the intentions of government, would have been in some degree excusable: but his culpable want of attention to look to the execution of the orders he had given for the establishment of the colonists, his lavishing the sums destined for these unfortunate strangers, or at least his indolence in permitting them to be lavished by others, are

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faults that admit of no palliation. In the sacred page of history, they impress an indelible stigma upon his name. Many of those unhappy emigrants, on not finding half of the assistance which they had been promised, and their wants imperiously demanded in the places to which they were directed, gave up the idea of establishing themselves in a body, either as cultivators of the soil or manufacturers, and sought to avail themselves individually of their profession and talents: which circumstance had a very different effect upon the prosperity of the empire. Several of them went to Petersburgh to prefer their complaints: but they were not listened to, and their remonstrances were left unanswered, because the treatment they had experienced could not be justified.

Besides, this was not the first time that Potemkin had taken upon himself to employ for his own individual advantage, or for purposes different from those agreed upon between him and the Empress, sums of considerable magnitude placed at his disposal. The Empress was ignorant of it; because she never made him render any account. Occurrences, however, might happen, that would reveal the misapplication of the money drawn from the treasury; since it was evident and clearly demonstrated by the inspection of the spots and places for the special improvement of

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which the money had been granted. Such an occurrence actually took place; and Potemkin was forced to plead guilty, but not without vowing implacable hatred to the man who subjected him to this humiliation.

The Empress resolved to visit Cherson and the new provinces which had lately been added to her empire. Yermoloff, the favourite, who was at that time the enemy of Prince Potemkin, by whom he had been formerly patronized, and some other courtiers, whose interest it was to lower the influence which the haughty and covetous minister had over his sovereign, eagerly seized an opportunity which they judged favourable to promote their object. They confirmed the Empress in her intention to travel through her new acquisitions, and urged her to hasten the execution of her design. When she first communicated her project to Potemkin, he was startled at the idea; but, soon recovering from his surprise, he became, contrary to general expectation, one of the most ardent promoters of the journey, and loudly proclaimed its importance and utility.

Yermoloff, desirous of engrossing the favour of Catharine, was jealous of Potemkin, and eagerly seized every opportunity that offered, to injure the man who shared his power over his mistress. It was only in opposition to him that he pleaded the

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cause of the unfortunate Khan Sahim Gueray, the payment of whose pension was cruelly neglected. His resentment against Potemkin was, besides, inflamed by a strong party, headed by Besborodko and Alexander Worontzoff.

When Potemkin saw that the journey to the Crimæa was irrevocably fixed upon, he thought it was high time to confess to Catharine that he had converted to his private use the last three millions of roubles which he had received for the improvement of the conquered countries. He added, that it had always been his intention to replace this money, and that he had taken his measures accordingly. He, however, intreated the Empress to allow him to draw this sum for the moment from the imperial treasury, since the application of it now became necessary sooner than he had foreseen: but he protested that he would punctually refund it as soon as he should have completed the sale of an estate which he then had an opportunity to dispose of to great advantage. The Empress believing, or feigning to believe, Potemkin's promises, granted his request; and he was authorized to draw three millions more from the imperial treasury. But he was never called upon to repay the money he had converted to his own use.

The ability with which Potemkin extricated himself from this difficulty, was a grievous dis-

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appointment to Yermoloff, and the rest of his enemies. They had recourse to other means of injuring him in the opinion of the Empress. Yermoloff was of a phlegmatic and indolent disposition, better fitted for the pursuit of pleasure than for the conducting of intrigues and ambitious designs. But though little formidable in himself, he was directed and supported by an active faction that made use of him and his influence over the Empress, as a tool to ruin the man who was hated by all the court. Besides the two ministers of state, Worontzoff, and Besborodko, who was beginning to rise in the public esteem, this faction was strengthened by the former favourite, Zavadowski, and General Levasheff, the uncle of the present favourite, whom Potemkin had dismissed from the service with disgrace, in consequence of a quarrel at play. Yermoloff undertook to lay before the Empress a letter of the Khan Sahim Gueraï, which insinuated that Potemkin had turned to his own profit the pension of that unfortunate prince of the Crimæa; that he had left him unprotected, unassisted, and without an asylum; and that he was deaf to his remonstrances, or prevented their reaching the throne. Yermoloff added, in confirmation of this letter, whatever could injure Potemkin in the opinion of the Empress; and persuaded her that her

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glory and her reputation were suffering from the treachery, haughtiness, and cruelty of the minister in whom she had placed her confidence.

All this appeared extremely plausible. Catharine's faith in Potemkin was shaken. She began to mistrust him, and treated him with a coldness which was observed by the whole court. Potemkin was offended, or thought he ought to shew some resentment. He quitted the court, and neglected his functions of adjutant-general. His family trembled. Most of the courtiers supposed him undone, and turned their backs upon him. The foreign ministers, fancying he had lost his influence, kept at a distance. Count Ségur, the French ambassador, who highly valued his friendship, continued faithful, warned Potemkin of the danger into which his retreat and his independent capricious disposition were betraying him, and represented to him that he was undone if he continued to bid defiance to the Empress. Potemkin answered, that he was touched with this mark of confidence; but that it would soon be seen whether he understood how to reclaim a woman and punish a foolish boy: at the same time he assured the Count that the obstacle which delayed the commercial treaty between France and Russia, respecting the introduction of French wines into the empire, would immediately be removed. The French ambassador left him, with

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the idea that he overrated his power. A few days after, he heard that Potemkin had set out for Narva. This looked, indeed, like a complete disgrace: but at the same time he was informed by the vice-chancellor, that the difficulty which had obstructed the negociation was overcome. This confirmed what Prince Potemkin had foretold. Two days after, Count Ségur and all the court were highly surprised at seeing Potemkin reappear in the circle of the Empress. He had probably calculated that his absence had had its effect, and wanted to terminate at last, by a violent measure, the irresolutions of the Empress and the apparent uncertainty of his own situation.

It was on the anniversary of the coronation that Potemkin shewed himself again, in the midst of the courtiers who crowded to Czárskoezelo to pay their homage to their sovereign. Yermoloff, who had triumphed for a few days, and who considered the appearance of his rival as an impotent defiance, forgot his naturally gentle and moderate temper, to assume towards Potemkin an air of arrogance, of which Potemkin himself had more than once set him the example. Potemkin's rage at this impudence may easily be imagined. On coming to court, he had indeed determined to have a decisive explanation with Catharine; but he did not exactly know when he should find a proper opportunity. The manners and the as-

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summons of Yermoloff would not allow him to postpone this explanation for a single second. He left the anti-room where the courtiers were assembled, and suddenly forcing his way into the apartment of the Empress :—

"I come," said he, "madam, to declare to "your Majesty, that your Majesty must this "instant choose between Yermoloff and me. "There is no alternative. Your Majesty must "either dismiss Yermoloff or me; one of us "must this very day quit your court. As long "as you keep that white negro" (alluding to Yermoloff's fair complexion and ingratitude), "I "will not set my foot within the palace. So "great is my hatred towards him, that I here "make a vow never to be reconciled while life "lasts; and, sooner or later, my revenge shall "overtake him. If, on the contrary, your "Majesty should sacrifice him at my request; "and if, further, your Majesty should be pleased "to appreciate my services according to their "probable merit, nothing shall exceed my zeal "and devotedness to your Majesty's service. I "shall continue to provide for the interests of "your heart, as well as for those of your empire; "and I hope I shall in future be more fortunate "in the choice I may make for you."

Intimidated by the vehemence of this language, the Empress made no reply, but immediately

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consented to the removal of Yermoloff. Yet even this condescension did not satisfy Potemkin. The facility with which he had obtained his request made him afraid of some sudden change: neither did he disguise his want of confidence in her firmness, but boldly declared he would not leave the room till he heard the order given for Yermoloff's instantly quitting the palace and retiring to his estates. The proud Catharine was overcome by the intrepidity of her arrogant minister. She did not even dare to follow her own inclination. Not contented therefore with giving the order Potemkin solicited, she even permitted him to send it to Yermoloff in her presence. Yermoloff, on the receipt of the mandate, was thunderstruck: yet, before he quitted the palace, he made several ineffectual attempts to obtain permission to take a personal farewell of the Empress; but Potemkin was too much on on his guard to suffer an interview to take place; and Catharine, no longer mistress of her own actions, submitted wholly to the will of Potemkin. Yermoloff departed, leaving his friends in the utmost consternation, and all the court and the foreign ministers greatly surprised at the issue of a struggle which had thus terminated contrary to the expectation and conjectures of the most profound courtiers.

Potemkin, in the mean time, was aware of the

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danger of leaving a void in the heart of Catharine through the loss of her lover, he therefore immediately set himself to work to find her another; and accordingly presented several young men to her notice: but, guided either by caprice or disgust, she shewed herself difficult to be pleased, and refused all that were proposed. At last Potemkin cast his eyes upon a captain in the guards, named Momonoff; and, whether he was sure to get him accepted, or whether he had determined in his own mind that he should not be refused, he immediately named him his aide-de-camp. Momonoff was a young man of talents, and of a good understanding; but he possessed these advantages of the mind at the expence of the qualities of the heart. He was witty, well informed, and fluently spoke several languages; but he was arrogant, wicked, and above all, extremely vain of the comeliness of his person. More attentive, in the choice of a lover for his mistress, to exterior accomplishments, than to the nobler qualities of the mind, and thinking it more prudent on this occasion to appear to judge as women generally do, Potemkin praised Momonoff to the Empress, and requested permission to introduce him. She consented indeed; but wishing, probably, to examine at her ease the individual who was to share her favours, she demanded that he should not be presented in the usual way. She agreed

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that Potemkin should send Momonoff to her with a roll of drawings. "The opinion," observed he, "which your Majesty expresses about "the drawings, will acquaint me with what your "Majesty thinks of the bearer." Catharine attentively examined the aide-de-camp, and, on returning him the drawings, observed that the outlines were beautiful, but the colouring bad.—This judgment indeed applied uncommonly well to Momonoff: his features were all beautifully regular, but his complexion rather sallow. He was, however, accepted; and, without any further explanation, he became the avowed favourite.

Potemkin, being thus free from all apprehensions on this score, and having no longer to fear the secret intrigues of a rival, revived the project of a journey to the Crimæa, and spoke of it in such a way, as if he himself had been the first to propose it: at least, he arranged matters in a manner so new, that it was equivalent to having originally suggested the excursion. Recollecting with vexation that this journey had been planned for his destruction, he resolved to convert it into a triumph for himself and his sovereign. Fully occupied with this design, he made preparations for a procession, which might, in more than one respect, remind the spectators of the triumphant marches of the heroes of Fable.

He began by giving orders to set all the troops

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of the interior of the empire in motion; and sent numerous detachments to Kief and Cherson, and to all the provinces through which the Empress was to pass. His object was not only to form a strong military line on the road of the sovereign, but also to accustom the troops to changes of garrison, which he had resolved to renew every year, as was done by many powers; and, by alarming the Turks, to force them as it were to a war for which they shewed so great an aversion, and in which he yet so ardently wished to engage them. Potemkin intentionally caused it to be published, that the Empress would find an army of one hundred thousand men collected in the neighbourhood of Kief, under the command of field-marshal Romanzoff; that he himself should command an army of the same strength near Cherson; and that another corps of sixty thousand men, commanded by general Samoïloff, his nephew, should be distributed in small detachments all over the country. These statements were probably a little exaggerated; but not very far from the truth. Potemkin had certainly made great efforts, with a view to impress an awe both on the Russians themselves and on their enemies. It was alike his object, that friendly and inimical powers should form an awful idea of the Russian forces; that the Empress herself, dazzled with the extent of her

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power, should ascribe its glory to him; and that the secret enemies he might still have about her person should be abashed.

But in making these immense preparations, Potemkin had still another design; that of intimidating Joseph the Second. This monarch had been invited to meet the Empress, and with this invitation he had promised compliance. The object of this second interview of the two sovereigns was to complete the arrangements which they had agreed upon in the former. It was therefore important to let Joseph see what an ally Russia was, and what hopes he might conceive from entering into close alliance with her. Potemkin well knew that the army would particularly arrest the attention of the Emperor. He accordingly wished to show it to him under a formidable and attractive aspect. He disposed every thing with so much skill, that the admiration of the monarch, always easily surprised and excited, did not leave him time to enter into any minute examination. And it must be confessed, after all, that Potemkin in this respect was not to be blamed. The interior defects, of which the Russian army might have its share, like every other, concerned only him who was entrusted with its administration; it was by no means necessary that strangers should be made acquainted

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with them. It was therefore good policy to show only its bright side, and to conceal the other.

Independent of these military dispositions, there were many other preparations required, to cause the Empress to be every where received with as much magnificence as Potemkin wished. For a long time he applied himself with unwearied ardour to these concerns. He had ordered immense works to be undertaken, at which numbers of labourers were employed night and day. Neither hands nor money were to be spared, and all obstacles, even those opposed by nature, were to be removed at any expence. Such were the commands of Prince Potemkin for the execution of the plans which he himself had formed. When they were nearly finished, he wanted to convince himself, by his own inspection, whether the decorations of the theatre (the picture which was displayed to the eyes of the sovereign was indeed deserving of that name) would produce the desired effect, and whether the illusion would be complete. He contrived different pretences for a journey, the object of which he wished to conceal; and, the better to defeat all inquiries, he went through Livonia to Kiof, where he intended to wait for the Empress.

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CHAP. IX.

Potemkin attends the Empress on her journey to the Crimæa, and excites the Turks to war.

As soon as Potemkin had informed the Empress that all the preparations for her journey were finished, she fixed upon the 14th of January, 1787, to set out from Petersburgh. Several of her maids of honour, the favourite Momonoff, the master of the horse, Count Narischkin, Count Juan Czernitcheff, the two counts Schuwaloff, and other courtiers, were appointed to attend her; and of the foreign ministers, she invited Mr. Allen Fitzherbert, the English ambassador, Count Ségur, the French ambassador, and count Cobentzel, the Austrian ambassador, to accompany her. They were alternately honoured with the prerogative of riding in the sledge where her Majesty was with her favourite Momonoff and her first maid of honour. The grand-duke was left at Petersburgh, under the protection as it were of Count Bruce, who was appointed governor of the capital. She took with her the two eldest sons of the grand-duke, Alexander, the present emperor (1811), and Constantine: but these young princes could not bear the fatigue of the

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journey; Constantine fell ill of the measles; and they were both left behind, after having travelled but a short way.

The procession, which left Petersburgh on the 14th, stopped at Czarskoezelo until the 18th of January, 1787. From that day the journey was regulated in the most commodious manner. Great fires were lighted on the road at the distance of every thirty fathoms. The Empress travelled no more than fifty versts (or about forty English miles) each day. She used to set out at nine o'clock in the morning, stopped for dinner at twelve, and set out again at three in the afternoon, to reach her night-quarters at about seven in the evening; where every accommodation was prepared for the reception of the travellers with as much taste as magnificence and profusion. The repasts were generally taken in buildings belonging to the crown, which had purposely been repaired and new furnished. Night-quarters were also mostly prepared in such houses. Sometimes the imperial traveller stopped at private houses, the owners of which had been liberally enabled to put them in a condition fit to receive their sovereign. Whenever the distance was too considerable to find any convenient dwelling to stop at, small palaces had been erected on purpose, upon the most elegant plans. At every repast there were fresh plate and fresh table-linen,

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which were left to the owner of the house, if it happened to be a private one; or given to some individual of the retinue, when it was an imperial building.

On the boundaries of each government the Empress was received by the governor-general of the province, who escorted her to the next government. In towns of some importance she stayed one or two days to rest, and to inspect the place; to inquire into the prosperity and resources of the country; and to give encouragements to, and revive by her presence, every branch of agriculture, industry, and administration. The immense preparations which had been made for her reception, the crowds of people that flocked on the roads to witness a sight so novel to the inhabitants of the interior; all gave to the places through which the Empress passed an appearance of bustle and prosperity with which she was delighted, but which often kept her ignorant as to the real state of things.

On the sixth day the Empress arrived at Smolensko, the first town where she made some stay. Fifteen days after she made her entry into Kief, where she was received by two of her ladies of the palace, the countesses Branitski and Skavronski, nieces of Potemkin; who presented her several lords of Russian Poland, such as the Lubomirskis, the Potockis, the Sapiehas, and others, who

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eagerly availed themselves of this opportunity to do homage to their new sovereign. These two ladies had been selected for this office, because they had married Polish lords whose estates were situated in that part of the empire. Potemkin himself arrived at Kiof soon after the Empress, together with Prince Nassau Siegen, who had just entered the Russian service. Potemkin began that very day to give splendid entertainments, which continued all the time that Catharine abode in that town, but were varied every day. A single firework cost forty thousand roubles. The money expended on this occasion by Potemkin was so considerable, that the ancient czars of Kiof would have splendidly supported their court during twelve months with the sums that were lavished in one to entertain Catharine. In the midst of these brilliant pleasures, which did so much honour to the gallantry and magnificence of Potemkin, he here displayed one of those blemishes in his character which so much obscured his great qualities. Kiof was the capital of the government of field-marshal Romanzoff. Potemkin, who disliked this respectable warrior, had purposely left his government destitute of every thing necessary for the magnificent reception of his sovereign; and it was but in the very last moments that the sums required for the most indispensable objects had been forwarded to the

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veteran general. As the town and country offered of course a melancholy aspect in several particulars, Potemkin, not satisfied with using no efforts to conceal those defects from the Empress, as he did in other places, rather took care to direct her attention to them, without once hinting at the true cause. The hatred he bore to Romanzoff was such, that as the latter was colonel of a regiment of cavalry, there was no promotion in that corps for the space of fourteen years.

The arrival of a deputy of the Tschirghis, a Tartar nation, by which he was sent to do homage to Catharine, was one of the interesting events that happened during the residence of the Empress at Kiof. Potemkin also prevailed with the Empress to review his fine regiment of cuirassiers; and she was equally delighted with their appearance and their evolutions.

The prince de Ligne joined the Empress at Kiof. As soon as a general cannonade informed her that the ice of the Boristhenes was gone, she embarked, to perform part of the journey by water. Potemkin had long before employed a multitude of workmen to blow up the rocks which obstructed the navigation of the Dnieper. These works had been conducted with much judgment and vigour. By dint of labour and money, the bed of the river had been levelled and rendered navigable as far as the cataracts.

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The fleet destined to convey the Empress and her retinue, consisted of fifty magnificent galleys of different sizes. The interior of each was distributed and arranged with much art and taste. The rooms were hung with Chinese silk, and furnished with sofas. There were twelve musicians in each of the principal galleys.

It was a beautiful day, in the beginning of spring, when the Empress went on board with her court. A perfect calm, a clear sky, a verdant shore, heightened the effect of the brilliant decorations with which Potemkin had resolved to enrapture his sovereign. He now set in motion all the wheels of the grand machine which he had got up with so much care, and presented to the eyes of the travellers an artificial spectacle, the most extraordinary and the most original that ever was conceived.

At greater or less distant intervals, the banks of the river displayed pretty insulated dwellings and well-built villages, the extent of which would lead the beholder to expect a numerous population, and their exterior seemed to bespeak the opulence and comforts of the inhabitants. Many of these private houses and villages had but just been built. It has even been asserted that the most distant buildings were unfinished, and had merely a front. They were so disposed with respect to the soil, as to form picturesque points of

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view, and for the space of three hundred miles the shores of the Dnieper were set out in the form of English parks. As the population of the country was insufficient to give animation to the landscape, peasants had been sent for from several parts of the empire; they were successively removed from one spot to the other (frequently in the night) to give to the roads where the Empress was to pass the next day that bustle and animation which else they would often have wanted.

It has also been reported that numerous herds of cattle of all kinds were removed in the same manner, to enliven the different prospects, and to afford a high opinion of the wealth, comfort, and prosperity of those countries. This is a circumstance not so easily to be credited, on account of the difficulty of making those animals perform frequent night-marches without exposing them to a great mortality. The shores of the Dnieper are, besides, rich enough in cattle not to need such a resource. There was, no doubt, much empty show in whatever Potemkin displayed to the eyes of the Empress during this famous journey; but there was also much reality. An ingenious writer, and a man of veracity, who was of the party, (the Prince de Ligne,) says: "I know very well what leger-"demain tricks are. For instance, the Empress, "who cannot run on foot as we do, is made to "believe that towns, for the building of which

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" she has assigned the necessary money, are " finished; while they often are towns without " streets, streets without houses, and houses " without roofs, doors, or windows. She sees " only the shops built with free-stone, and the " colonnades of the governor-general's palaces." — " But as I made several excursions without " the Empress, I discovered many things with " which even Russians are unacquainted; superb " establishments in their infancy; growing ma- " nufactures; villages with regular streets, sur- " rounded with trees, and irrigated by rivulets." Envy, which fastens itself upon great men, has magnified what was but show, and diminished what was real. If Potemkin could not pass, in the eyes of the witnesses of this extraordinary procession, for a profound statesman and skilful minister, as he pretended to be, he must however have been considered as a man of fertile genius, of an eccentric imagination, and of uncommon talents. Besides, is it to be supposed that Catharine herself really credited the delusions with which her ministers endeavoured to amuse her? Could this princess fancy that it was possible for countries which had but just acknowledged her sway, and had experienced the ravages of a ferocious war, to be already in such a flourishing state? Would she have been authorized to expect such a metamorphosis through the genius

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of Potemkin? Would the genius either of Sully or of Colbert have accomplished it in so short a time? Catharine probably was the confidant and not the dupe of her minister. And, after all, her journey to Cherson proved extremely useful in a political point of view: it did infinite good to the provinces she travelled through; it scattered money about, and made known the natural advantages and productiveness of these countries, independently of what art superadded to their natural beauty on this occasion. It has given foreigners a high idea of the power of Russia, and of the wealth of the Empress. Lastly, it fixed the attention of the Russian government upon these newly acquired provinces, encouraged their inhabitants, and prepared the way for that splendour and real and lasting prosperity which these countries are every day attaining by a rapid gradation.

Taking it for granted that Catharine was acquainted with the intentions of her minister in regard to the scenes that were to be performed, during this journey, which was contrived solely for the purpose of making a deep impression upon both foreigners and natives; we shall not dwell upon another trick (if this expression may be used) with which some authors have seriously reproached Potemkin, and which appears to us an obvious consequence of the secret views by

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which he was actuated. In several towns through which the Empress passed, the shops were full of all kinds of bale-goods, and the magazines crammed with bags that seemed to contain large stores of corn. Both the bales and the bags, it is said, were empty: very few of them contained the articles which were ticketed on the out-side merely for show. Were even this circumstance true, we have already apologized for Potemkin in this respect: but indeed it seems more probable that the whole is a fabrication. There is no reason why, in a country so fertile in corn as Russia, it should have been difficult to have formed large magazines, particularly as the stay of the troops, in the provinces through which the Empress passed, rendered that precaution necessary. Nor is it at all impossible that merchants of Petersburgh, Riga, Moscow, Casan, Astrachan, Cherson, Poland, and even Germany, might have hastened to carry their merchandize on a road where an opulent and extravagant court was to pass, and which necessarily would attract an immense concourse of strangers. How many more important errors have crept into the writings of historians who were eager to reflect upon great statesmen, merely to give themselves an appearance of severity which overawes their readers! A proneness to censure has perhaps been the source of as much exaggeration as the mean propensity to

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flattery. Without attempting any comparison between these two blemishes, we shall barely observe that they each mislead and impose upon the reader.

After a short voyage, the fleet cast anchor at Kanieve, on the Boristhenes; where the king of Poland, Stanislaus Augustus, had been waiting three months under the name of Count Poniatowsky, and had expended three millions of livres to see the Empress for three hours.

It is not positively known whether Potemkin invited the King to meet the Empress, that his Majesty might by his presence augment the splendour of the journey, or whether Stanislaus himself wished for an interview with Catharine. The circumstance that the King received one hundred thousand roubles for his journey, seems to warrant the first supposition.

The meeting of the two sovereigns must have been interesting for the spectators, and affecting for themselves. They had not seen each other since Poniatowsky had been at Petersburgh as ambassador for the King of Poland and Elector of Saxony. Catharine at that time held but a secondary rank. The intimacy which had subsisted between them had been free from ambition and political views, and of course mutually gratifying. The monarch of Poland, who had a loving and tender heart, might perhaps,

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at their first interview, have recalled with pleasure the remembrance of those happy moments: but this recollection of times so different from her present situation, did not suit the proud and now powerful Catharine. The Prince de Ligne went in a small boat to inform the King of the arrival of the Empress. An hour after, the great imperial lords fetched him in a brilliant sloop. The Empress received Poniatowsky with ceremony, in the presence of Potemkin, Momonoff, and some other lords. Surprised at this formal reception, the King looked a little embarrassed: but recovering from his momentary surprise, he addressed the Empress with that gracefulness which was natural to him. As for Catharine, she could not on this occasion belie her usual affability; but with her wonted amiableness of manners she took care to blend the superiority of an empress, and appeared more anxious to inspire Stanislaus with respect and gratitude than with any other sentiment. The King was indeed imposed on by the appearance of esteem which Catharine shewed to him, and he thought it more sincere than it actually proved. He preferred some requests; he solicited an increase of revenue and prerogatives for himself, and the free navigation of the Dnieper for his subjects. The Empress feigned to grant every thing, though firmly resolved to perform none of her promises. Po-

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temkin did the same. He was in truth delighted with the Polish monarch, whom he had never seen before: but this favourable impression did not make him forget the designs which he might have upon Poland, or the necessity of keeping that republic in the most absolute dependency on Russia, until it should become one of her provinces. Stanislaus, however, with that frankness and unsuspecting simplicity natural to himself, placed as full confidence in the good faith of the minister, as he had before in the sincerity of the Empress. The dinner was uncommonly magnificent, and the greatest cheerfulness was visible in every countenance. The monarch's health was drunk under a triple discharge of all the guns of the fleet. Delighted with the agreeable moments he had passed, with the attentions he had received, and with the flattering discourses that had been addressed to him, the King took leave of the Empress, fully convinced that he had entirely gained her over to his interests. He went back to Kanieve, where he entertained the courtiers of Catharine with a brilliant supper and a superb fire-work. The whole night that the squadron remained at anchor under the windows of the King, the hills and dales were illuminated by a representation of the Vesuvius.

Catharine continued her journey by water: but after leaving Kanieve, her voyage was not

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without danger. It is rather surprising that so much pains should have been taken to excavate the bed of the river and to embellish its shores, and no attention paid to examine the vessel which conveyed the illustrious traveller. A violent storm arose; two or three galleys were wrecked on sand-banks, and that of the Empress being in a bad condition, was in the most imminent danger of being dashed to pieces against the rocks, by the violence of the current, which her unskilful mariners knew not how to avoid. Had it not been for the Prince of Anhalt and the minister Besborodko, who devoted themselves to save the Empress, and assisted the sailors in manœuvring the galley, she would have infallibly perished. In the midst of this confusion, a vessel loaded with wine was burnt close to the imperial galley, and added new peril to that with which the Empress was threatened by the waves. She kept perfectly cool and collected, as she constantly did on every occasion where her life was in danger.

After this perilous and harassing day, the Empress landed at Krementzchuk; where she was lodged in a superbly ornamented palace which had just been built for her, and close to which a beautiful garden had been planted, adorned with the most rare exotic trees. Here she found an army of twelve thousand horsemen newly clothed, among which Potemkin's fine regiment of cuirassiers were

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the most conspicuous. They manœuvred in her presence, and the Empress was so satisfied, that she wrote to the governor of Petersburgh.

" I found, on my arrival here, one-third of " that fine cavalry, of which some railers pre- " tend to deny the existence. However, I have " seen these troops, and I have seen them in a " state of perfection, to which no other corps " comes near. I beg you will tell it to the un- " believers, and make use of my letter to put an " end to the cavils of the ill-disposed. It is high " time that entire justice should be done to those " who devote themselves to my service and that " of the state with as much zeal as success."

The Emperor Joseph the Second, who travelled by the name of Count Falkenstein, had already arrived some time before Catharine at Cherson. He now came to meet her at Kaïdak, the ancient metropolis of the Zaporogians, where she landed, near the Cataracts, to continue her route by land with the Emperor. He joined this princess the moment after Potemkin had given her a brilliant concert. It was repeated on his account. As he was a great musician, nothing appeared to interest and astonish him more than fifty *a, b, c,* that is to say, a concert in which several musicians play the same note. The Prince de Ligne says, such a concert is a heavenly music, at least it is too extraordinary to be known on earth.

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At Cherson, Catharine lodged at the admiralty, which had been most brilliantly fitted up for her reception. A throne in particular had been erected, which cost fourteen thousand roubles. Cherson was, as it were, the metropolis of a new empire to Catharine; it was here, above all, that Potemkin wished to display a magnificence worthy of an empress of the East.

This rising town appeared already opulent and populous. Several houses had been built before the arrival of the Empress; they were all occupied, owing to the extraordinary concourse of strangers from all countries. Greeks, Tartars, French, among whom were Edward Dillon and Alexander Lameth; Spaniards, among whom was Miranda, since a general of the French republic, and recently a founder of the new free States of South America; English, among whom shone Lady Craven, afterwards Margravine of Anspach; Poles, and others, had been attracted either by mere curiosity, or by the wish of paying homage to the Empress. Many brilliant warehouses, which displayed the most costly and various merchandize, announced the first dawn of a commerce that could not fail of acquiring every day more consistency and splendour. Catharine, on walking through the streets of Cherson, was in a continual enchantment; and Potemkin, as the author of these wonders, shared in

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the heart of his sovereign the enthusiasm with which the sight of them inspired her.

In several respects, it is true, the prosperity of this new colony was more apparent than real. For instance, it was not commerce alone that had furnished it with the various articles which its warehouses contained in abundance: immense quantities of goods had been purchased at Moscow and Warsaw, and transported to Cherson at the expence of the state. But this expence must have been repaid, and these goods mostly consumed, by the number of strangers whom curiosity to witness such an uncommon spectacle, and the splendour of this long-talked-of journey, had drawn to Cherson. Among the females who graced the court of Catharine, was a Grecian lady of exquisite beauty, whose charms had touched the heart of Prince Potemkin. His partiality for her made him confer the government of Cherson upon her husband, Colonel de Witte. A few years after, when she went to Constantinople, the French ambassador, Count de Choiseul-Gouffier, accommodated her with apartments in the Hotel de France; and after the death of Potemkin, she followed the fortunes of the Polish count, Felix Potocki: but at the solicitations of the Countess, his wife, the Empress caused Madame de Witte to be confined in a nunnery. The Prince de Ligne pronounced her the handsomest female in the universe.

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The port of Cherson was crowded with ships, and there were several on the stocks. Three vessels were launched; one of 66 guns, and two frigates of 40 guns each. The gauzes, laces, furbelows, garlands, pearls, and flowers, with which the canopies erected on shore for the two imperial majesties were ornamented, looked as if they had been arranged by the most delicate hands; and yet all was the work of Russian soldiers. There was no deception in the bustle of the port, or in the expedition with which ships were built. This is a most important concern for Russia; and surely, the man whose genius had so skilfully and successfully watched over this essential branch of administration, might be allowed to employ some forced means to give the appearance of prosperity to less interesting and still neglected parts.

As the Empress was walking through the streets of Cherson, she was imperceptibly led to a gate facing the east, over which was a Greek inscription in these words: *This is the road that leads to Byzantium.* Had this inscription been an old one, it would only have shewn that it served as a guide-post to travellers. But Potemkin who neglected nothing that could confirm Catharine in her grand projects, directed her attention to the words of the incription; and her Majesty appeared flattered with the omen.

Potemkin had here two objects in view. He

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wanted to communicate to Joseph the Second the ardour which he kept alive in the breast of Catharine for the ruin of Turkey, and its partition between the two powers. This last hope was calculated to captivate Joseph. The monarch, however, was fully aware of the obstacles which the other powers of Europe would oppose to the execution of this design. He particularly considered, that, from the situation of his dominions, he alone would have these obstacles to encounter, while they would scarcely affect his ally. Russia, to which the best part of the booty was to devolve, would obtain it almost without any effort; while he, reduced to a less share, was running the risk of having to contend for it with powerful adversaries. It cannot be supposed that these or similar considerations might not have made an impression on the mind of the Emperor; and this monarch must undoubtedly have been very far from sharing the ardent enthusiasm of Catharine with regard to their mutual design. But the first news of the rebellion that had broke out in Brabant, which he received at Cherson, was well calculated to cool his ardour. He, courtier-like, dissembled the uneasy feelings which this event must have caused. It was conjectured he would immediately have set out for the Netherlands: but, without discovering his intentions or explaining the motives of his con-

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duct, he did not appear disposed to leave the Empress; on the contrary, he attended her on her journey to the interior of the Crimæa. In the mean time, he mentioned the necessity of sending numerous forces to the revolted provinces, as a difficulty which would greatly enhance the value of the assistance he had promised to Russia. Joseph the Second had a good understanding, much firmness, genius, great military and political talents, and excellent intentions: and with all these splendid qualities, he brought great misfortunes upon his subjects, caused still greater evils to impend over his family, and, as he foresaw them, died broken-hearted. Seduced by the fondness of innovating which characterised his time, without being sufficiently acquainted with the human heart to calculate the effect of the changes he projected, he thought he might trample under foot what he called prejudices, because he despised them. The insurrection, of which he was apprised at Cherson, and which he did not think worthy of serious attention, had entirely been brought on by his own fault. It proved the primary cause of the dreadful shock which Europe has since experienced, and of the fall of more than one throne.

The Empress was received in the Crimæa by all the Mirzas with the most lively demonstrations of respect and attachment. Catharine rewarded

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them with magnificent presents, though there was so little sincerity in their protestations, that very shortly after they attempted to join the Turks against the Russians.

The chiefs of the Tartars ordered their troops to perform various evolutions for the amusement of the Empress. Suddenly the carriage in which she rode with the Emperor was surrounded by a body of one thousand Tartars; they were appointed to escort her: but Joseph the Second, who had not been apprised of their intention beforehand, expressed a surprise which bordered on uneasiness; while the Empress, confiding in Potemkin, and justly supposing that nothing was done without his orders, preserved her usual tranquillity. In fact, what had she to fear from a small body of Tartars, in a country where her minister had collected, at no great distance, an army of one hundred and fifty thousand men?

At Barczisaraï the Empress resided in the palace of the last khan of the Crimæa; which was a compound of Moorish, Arabian, Chinese, and Turkish architecture, with fountains, little gardens, paintings, gilt ornaments, and inscriptions, in every corner. In the evening of the first day of her abode in that town, Potemkin entertained her with the spectacle of a mountain artificially illuminated, which suddenly appeared in a blaze.—Catharine, in the whole course of

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this journey, received the demonstrations of affection and respect from her subjects with a particular affability and satisfaction, that sweetly rewarded the efforts which were made everywhere to please her.

From Stare Crim, a building of which was transformed into a palace, to sleep there a single night, the Empress returned to St. Petersburgh by way of Pultawa. On reaching that place, she was filled with rapture at a spectacle which Potemkin had prepared for her, and which was worthy alike of her to whom he gave it and of him by whom it was contrived. Two armies appeared on a sudden. They engaged and began a battle, which was the exact representation of that famous conflict in which Peter the First routed Charles the Twelfth of Sweden on the same spot. While Catharine was rapturously applauding the exploits and triumphs of the nation she governed; Joseph, moved at the sight of the Swedish hero in the same dress which he wore on that fatal day, could not help deploring the misfortune of that formidable warrior, who wanted nothing but a more mature understanding to have been one of the greatest men.

At Moscow, Joseph left Catharine, delighted with her behaviour and the attentions of her court. On parting, he is reported to have given a positive promise to the Empress that he would

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assist her to have her grandson crowned at Constantinople. However it is by no means probable that he had any intention of performing his promise. He returned to his dominions through Poland; while Catharine pursued the road to Petersburgh, where she arrived on the 22d of July.

Potemkin did not accompany the Empress farther than Pultawa. Having determined at any rate to provoke the Turks to declare war and commence hostilities, he thought he ought to remain on the frontiers, whence he could more easily accomplish his purpose. In this resolution Potemkin was influenced by a personal motive. In case of a rupture, he wished to commence the operations and capture a fortress. This was a necessary step to obtain for himself the grand military order of St. George, the only Russian order with which he was not decorated, and which on that account he most ardently longed for. He had taken every possible precaution to succeed in this his two-fold project. Emissaries in every part of the Ottoman empire supplied him with accurate intelligence. He was informed that his measures began to make a lively impression upon the Divan, and that the Turks were at length disposed to hostilities. This was exactly the point to which Potemkin wished to bring them. And these secret intrigues, besides, were not the only means to which he had recourse.

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The Russians took care to give much more open provocations. Abusing the privileges which had been granted to them by the last treaty, they were not contented with trading freely with their vessels in the Black Sea, they even obstructed the traffic of the Turks; and the complaints and remonstrances which the Sublime Porte preferred on this subject at Petersburgh, were not listened to, but the infractions of the Russians openly tolerated by their government. At length, Potemkin, who could no longer contain his impatience, prevailed with the Empress to order her ambassador at Constantinople to require of the Sublime Porte a prompt and definitive answer concerning the disputes that had arisen relative to the boundaries of the two empires, and some other claims to which the Turks could not yet resolve to accede. The peremptory request of a hasty decision was a new affront, added to the many imperious demands with which Russia was continually insulting the weak Ottomans. It was therefore justly supposed, that if the Grand Signior retained any sense of his own dignity, his answer would be a declaration of war. The Divan, however, had once more the weakness not to appear offended; it returned an answer in the course of a few days to the demands of the cabinet of St. Petersburgh; and, recapitulating them one after the other, it observed:

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"That the Sublime Porte refused to admit a "Russian consul at Varna, because the people of "that town would not receive him."

"That it declined the proposal of building a "Greek church at Constantinople, because it was "of a nature so extraordinary as to preclude all "examination."

"That it considered the proposition of recog- "nising the submission of the Crimæa to the "Russian empire, as an infraction of the last "treaties."

"Lastly, that, to the demand of an account of "their warlike preparations, the Turks had a right "to ask in reply, what was the object of the im- "mense armaments of Russia, and particularly "of the stationing of a Russian fleet in the Black "Sea."

Some time after this reply had been transmitted to M. de Bulgakof, the Russian ambassador at Constantinople, this minister received a note, couched in rather peremptory terms, and shewing that the Divan, better informed of the secret intentions of Russia, and sensible of the impossibility of continuing at peace with that power, had determined to prefer, in its turn, demands, which, if granted, would protect the Ottoman empire against an aggression, in which its enemy would have had too many advantages; and, if

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refused, would clearly unveil its true sentiments. By this note the Turks demanded,

" 1st, That the Russian troops should evacuate Kartalinia; and that the cabinet of St. Petersburgh should no longer protect Prince Heraclius."

" 2dly, That the Russian vessels in the ports of Turkey, which were suspected of carrying thither prohibited goods, should all be submitted, without exception, to a rigorous search."

" 3dly, That the Russian consuls in the Turkish empire should be strictly confined to functions relating to commerce; and that if they were suspected of meddling with other affairs, the Sublime Porte should be immediately authorized to expel them from her dominions."

" 4thly, That it should be free to the Porte to keep consuls in the commercial towns of Russia, just as she permitted the Russians to have them in Turkey."

" 5thly, That, under no pretence whatever, should Russia be allowed to support the pretensions of the inhabitants of Moldavia and Wallachia; and that, especially, she should not grant any assistance to individuals of the families of the Hospodars."

After the example of Russia, the Sublime Porte required a prompt answer: but M. de Bulgakof declared that he must consult his court;

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and accordingly dispatched an extraordinary messenger to St. Petersburgh.

It would not have been difficult to have settled these differences. As the demands of the Porte were not unreasonable, and indicated on her part the desire of maintaining a peace, of which the inhabitants of Turkey ardently wished the continuation, it would have been easy for the two powers to have agreed, without having recourse to arms. But Potemkin panted for war. Vexed at the tardiness of the Ottomans, and at not having yet been able to rouse their pride, he expressly ordered Bulgakof to bring the Divan to an open rupture; leaving to him the choice of the means for accomplishing this object.

Being thus duly authorised, and certain of support, the Russian ambassador exceeded all bounds. He made a jest of the note that had been communicated to him by the Divan; and declared that his court could not pay any attention or make any reply to propositions which were too ridiculous to deserve being seriously discussed. Not satisfied with treating the business with extreme levity, he tolerated the same freedom in the young men attached to his embassy. Several of them affected to conduct themselves most indecorously; and it is even said that some carried their impudence so far as to be guilty of rudeness to the grand vizier.

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While Bulgakof was entering so well into Potemkin's views, and so faithfully executing his orders, the Turks, excited by England and Prussia, and inflamed by their own resentment, were nevertheless a prey to great uneasiness. They could not explain the silence of the Count de Choiseul-Gouffier, the French ambassador at Constantinople. A treaty had just been concluded at Petersburgh between France and Russia. This was in fact but a commercial treaty, yet it might contain some secret articles. England, jealous at seeing herself deprived of the exclusive trade of the North, insinuated to the Turkish ministers that France was allied with Russia for the purpose of destroying the Ottoman empire. The warlike preparations commenced by Russia soon after the conclusion of that treaty; the journey of the Empress to the Crimæa; the circumstance of Count de Ségur, the French ambassador at Petersburgh, being selected to accompany her on this journey; the flattering preference shewn to the very minister who had negociated and signed a treaty, the source of so much uneasiness to the Porte; his being treated, during the whole journey, with the most marked attention; lastly, the Count de Choiseul persisting in the most obstinate silence under such distressing circumstances; his giving the Porte not the least sign of regard or concern in the name of his

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court;—all these things co-operated to strengthen the suspicions which England so industriously strove to excite, and seriously alarmed the Divan.

The motive which induced the French ambassador to persevere in the silence of which the Porte complained, was different from that which the English endeavoured to assign. As he had not received any communications from the Russian ambassador, he was ignorant of the subjects of complaint which that power had, or pretended to have, against the Turks; and as he could not penetrate into the secret designs of Catharine and her minister, he apprehended no rupture between the two courts. When the grand-visir requested him to explain himself categorically respecting the intentions of France, the Count de Choiseul prevailed with Count Ségur to complain at Petersburgh of the mysterious conduct which Mr. de Bulgakof manifested towards him. The Empress readily listened to his complaint. She ordered her minister at Constantinople to be less reserved with the Count de Choiseul, and to consult with him about the most proper means of maintaining peace. This order did not compromise Catharine, and wrought no change in her projects and dispositions. The pacific views which this command professed, deceived no one. Bulgakof acted as before, and continued to provoke the Turks to war. The French ambassador made

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some attempts to preserve peace; probably without expecting any great success from his negociations.

The English, more anxious than ever to irritate the Porte, promised her their assistance, and gave her to understand that she had nothing to hope from France. At length the Turks themselves, deeming war inevitable, determined not to give Russia time to make greater preparations, but rather to avail themselves of those which they had made at a considerable expence. Convinced that, if France did not assist, she would at least not declare against them; relying also on the promises of England, and upon the diversion which Prussia was to make in their favour; and confident that, with such assistance, they could not fail of obtaining splendid triumphs over Russia, the Turks at last, displaying more boldness than could have been expected, resolved to be the aggressors, and on the 18th of August, 1787, proclaimed war against Russia.

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CHAP. X.

Potemkin is appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army against the Turks.

The Turkish declaration of war, and the news that Mr. de Bulgakof had been confined at Constantinople in the castle of the Seven Towers, reached Petersburgh on the festival of St. Alexander Newski, at the moment when a splendid ball was going forward at court. The intelligence did not at all disturb the entertainment: the joy occasioned by the actual commencement of a war so much wished for, tended rather to heighten its mirth. Count Besborodko immediately wrote a manifesto, which on the following Sunday was read in the imperial chapel, in the presence of the Empress and her court.

This manifesto, couched in the usual spirit of such writings, contained the blackest charges against the Porte, and the highest encomiums on the conduct of Russia. The Turks had been treacherous, faithless, and insolent, in every transaction; and the Russians loyal, faithful, and moderate. After a long enumeration of the pretended wrongs committed by the Porte, it ended by observing, "that the act of sending Mr. de

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" Bulgakof, the Russian ambassador, to the " castle of Seven Towers, where, in contempt of " the rights of nations, he is kept a prisoner, su- " persedes the necessity of making farther reflec- " tion on the subject. The Porte has thought " fit to unite perfidy with the most insulting at- " tack. She omits no one circumstance that can " evince the strong desire she has long felt of " breaking a peace which was granted in the most " liberal manner. Provoked by a conduct so " offensive, the Empress sees herself obliged, " unwillingly, to take up arms, as the only means " remaining of maintaining her rights, which she " has acquired at the expence of so much blood, " and of vindicating her insulted dignity. En- " tirely innocent of all the evils attendant on " the war now ready to be kindled, she has a " right to depend upon divine protection, and " the succour of her friends, as well as upon the " devout prayers of all christians, to enable her " to triumph in the cause of justice and self- " defence."

Notwithstanding this kind of appeal, France, which was already agitated by domestic disturbances, determined to remain neuter. Spain followed her example. Sweden intended to avail herself of the moment when Russia should be occupied elsewhere, to attack her with the prospect of greater success. England and Prussia

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declared for the Porte, and endeavoured to strengthen the Turks with the alliance of the Poles, whom they excited to defend their liberties, which were continually attacked by the Russians. Joseph the Second, alone faithful to his engagements, joined the Empress, to effect with her the destruction of the ancient and formidable enemy of his subjects and of his house. But the insurrection of Brabant, which was raging in all its fury, and some disturbances that then began to break out in Hungary, prevented his employing in this grand enterprise forces sufficient to insure its success.

The Turks prepared for war with the greatest alacrity. Troops were assembled from every part of the empire. The grand-visir unfurled the standard of Mahomet, and formidable armies advanced from the shores of the Danube to the frontiers of the Ukraine and the Crimæa. To increase the respect of the people for his minister and the confidence of the army in his abilities, and to enable him to provide instantaneously for any sudden exigencies and direct the operations of the war with greater effect, the sultan entrusted the grand-visir with almost unbounded dictatorial powers. He sent him a gold-hilted sabre, richly ornamented with diamonds. The old captain Pasha, who had grown grey in the service of his country, was appointed grand-admiral of the Turkish fleet, and general of all the armies to be

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employed on the Euxine. A squadron of sixteen ships of the line, eight frigates, and sixteen smaller vessels, sailed under his command. The old admiral was just then returned from Egypt, where he had subdued the rebellious Beys, Ibrahim and Amurath, and collected a tribute of more than twelve millions of piastres. But, far from being inflated with this success, he even now recollected with grief and humility the disasters of Tscheshme, where his fleet, in a former war, had been destroyed by Alexey Orloff.

As the Turks suspected the fidelity of the Greeks, they disarmed them all, and at the same time invited the Tartars to return to their allegiance to the grand-signior. In vain had the Empress loaded them with presents, in vain had she caused the Koran to be printed, and mosques to be built for them; they beheld in her only the Christian, and eagerly returned to their ancient masters. The Mirzas elected Shah Par Gheray for their khan, who soon collected an army of forty thousand Tartars.

Potemkin, on his part, did not remain idle. At his recommendation, a fleet of eight ships of the line, twelve frigates, and near two hundred brigs and gun-boats, was equipped in the Euxine, and two strong squadrons, under the command of Admirals Kruse and Greig, were in readiness at Cronstadt to sail for the Mediterranean. He also reminded the Emperor of Germany of his pro-

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mises and engagements; and this prince, equally desirous of a war with the Turks, was not long before he sent a numerous army to besiege Belgrade, and another strong corps to join the Russian army.

Prince Potemkin, as commander-in-chief of the Russian forces, had under his orders the old Marshal Romanzoff, and Generals Soltikoff, Suwaroff, Repnin, Kamenskoï, Kakoffsky, and others. He formed his army into two grand divisions. The first, which was called the Army of the Ukraine, was placed under the command of Marshal Romanzoff, and destined to commence hostilities in Moldavia: the second, which Potemkin commanded in person, and which was called the Army of Ekatharinoslaaf, marched towards Oczakof.

It was on this march that the column of Major-general Rehbinder met the Sheïk Mansour at the head of the Tartar hordes of Mount Causasus. They were entrenched behind their waggons. On the approach of the Russians, they repeated aloud a short prayer, and then displayed the most desperate courage in defence of their entrenchments. But their valour was of no avail; the trenches were carried, and four hundred Tartars left dead upon the spot. Having collected fresh troops during the night, the Tartar chief boldly returned to the charge the next day; and without being

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dismayed by their artillery, he attacked the Russians in their camp. The Tartars were repulsed with great slaughter. But the contest was not ended. The Tartars, being reinforced, made a third attempt, in which Major-general Prince Radischeff completely defeated them. The Tartar villages around were plundered, and destroyed by fire. Some attempts of the Turks against the island of Taman and the Crimæa met with no better success.

Next to the destruction of a Russian army or fleet, nothing was more interesting to the Porte than the recovery of Kinburn. This fortress is situated exactly opposite to Oczakoff, from which it is separated by the mouth of the Dnieper. A Turkish squadron appeared under its walls, but returned without making any attempt. But the brave garrison of Oczakoff, though deserted by the Turkish fleet, made every effort to recover Kinburn. They were however repulsed in their two first attempts. In the mean time the Russian garrison of Kinburn was secretly reinforced. Ignorant of this circumstance, five thousand Turks made a third effort. They crossed the river in the night, and attacked the fortress before day. The Russians maintained their posts; and as soon as the day dawned, they quitted the defensive, and sallying from the gates under the command of the brave Suwaroff, who so greatly

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distinguished himself in later times, they attacked the Turks in their turn. A desperate action ensued; the Turks were reinforced; but the Russians returned three times to the charge, and their perseverance crowned their valour with a complete victory. Four thousand Turks were found dead on the field of battle; while the loss of the Russians was comparatively small. Suwaroff himself, who always animated his troops by his example, was wounded in the conflict. A grand *Te Deum* was solemnly sung in all the churches at Petersburgh.

But this success did not stimulate Potemkin to make an attempt upon Oczakoff. The Prince de Ligne found him soon after in a most desponding mood at his head-quarters of Elizabeth Gorod. He complained of being in want of every thing; and declared he should be the most unfortunate of men, if Heaven did not assist him. Prince de Ligne presented him with a letter of the Emperor, which contained the Austrian plan of operations; and asked him what he intended to do? Potemkin promised to give his plan the next day. But a fortnight elapsed before he sent this laconic plan: "With the help of Providence, "I shall attack whatever enemies I meet between "the Bog and the Dniester."

About this time a detachment of Cossacks captured four Tartars. Being brought to Potemkin,

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they stood before him with dejected countenances, fearing to be deprived of life: but he ordered them to be thrown into a large tub of water; and observed to the Prince de Ligne, that by this Greek immersion, they were blessed with a Christian baptism. It was also at Elizabeth Gorod, where Potemkin continued all the winter of 1787 and 1788, that he formed the singular project of raising a regiment of Jews, which he called *Israelowsky*.

While the war, which Potemkin had so ardently desired, and which he so badly conducted, was kindled in the East, the good understanding between Russia and Sweden was every day abating; and Poland, by its interior disturbances, creating new sources of uneasiness. Russia saw herself in danger of being forced to defend herself against her neighbours, when she was carrying on, at a great distance, a war that demanded her best exertions. Such a critical situation required two heads, like that of Catharine and of her minister. Potemkin, whose influence in her councils was nearly absolute, was neither disconcerted nor dismayed. He was sure that the western and southern powers of Europe would not break their neutrality; Prussia, since she was governed by Frederick-William the Second, could not inspire much alarm; and the alliance of Russia with Austria was consolidated by

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their common interest. Under these circumstances, he was warranted in judging Russia strong enough (notwithstanding her being at war with Turkey) to resist Sweden, if that power dared to attack her; and under this conviction, far from diminishing the warlike ardour with which the Russians were inflamed, he on the contrary strove to excite it more than ever.

But the Grand-duke of Russia was seized with the same ardour. Tired of his inactivity, and fancying that the Russian troops, by attacking the Turks, were marching to infallible triumphs, he thought he could not meet with a more favourable opportunity for acquiring glory. He eagerly solicited permission of his mother to join the army, that he might be present at the opening of the next campaign.

Catharine witnessed, with as much uneasiness as astonishment, the warlike enthusiasm which had seized her son. His request startled her. She was sensible that the Grand-duke could not be much attached to her person, and thought she should have every thing to fear from him, if he ever evinced an active and warlike disposition. For the moment, however, she dissembled her surprise, gave him an evasive answer, and inwardly resolved to consult Potemkin before she came to any determination.

Potemkin's surprise was not inferior to that of

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the Empress. He did not long hesitate about his answer. Nothing could have alarmed him more than to behold the Grand-duke with the army. If Catharine was apprehensive of finding in her son a competitor, or an adversary formidable at least by the lawfulness of his claims; Potemkin was not less afraid of meeting in the heir of the throne a troublesome superintendant, and a justly irritated master, whose appearance alone might have been sufficient to counterbalance the power which he arrogated to himself, and to annihilate his absolute empire. He accordingly wrote to the Empress, that she ought by no means to comply with the request of the Grand-duke; but that it might perhaps be prudent not to abash him with a positive refusal; that she ought to temporize and amuse him under different pretences, until the end of the campaign.

Catharine was following this conduct with her son, when an incident freed her from her embarrassment, and furnished her with what she had not hoped, a legitimate excuse for an absolute denial. The Grand-duchess, either secretly instigated by the Empress herself, or actually prompted by her affection for her husband, all at once applied for leave to attend the Grand-duke to the army. Catharine peremptorily refused this request; and she certainly was authorized to do so, without

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incurring any blame. The Grand-duchess had recourse to tears and lamentations. She complained of the hardship of being separated from a husband whom she tenderly loved, at the very moment when, being on the point of presenting him with a fresh pledge of conjugal affection, she valued his presence more than ever. The Empress laid great stress upon this circumstance, and assured her son, that he could not decently leave Petersburgh, when his duty, both as a husband and a father, imperiously commanded his stay. Little convinced by an argument which he did not deem adequate, the Grand-duke persisted in his solicitations. He even went so far as to suspect the secret motive of his mother, and protested that his attachment to her person was as sincere as his intentions were pure and loyal. But the Empress remained inexorable. "What "will be said," urged he in vain, "by those "who are acquainted with my project, if they "see me abandon it at the moment of its execu- "tion? I shall be accused of levity and cowardice "at the approach of danger."—"It will be said," "replied Catharine, "that the Grand-duke is an "obedient son." This reply was peremptory. The prince was silenced. He concealed his dissatisfaction, and gave his project up. He was, however, allowed to serve in Finland, when the war with Sweden broke out. He eagerly joined

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the army: but when he found that he was to be under the command of General Moussin Pouschkin, who had the strictest orders to watch over him, he hastened back to Petersburgh; where the vexations he had experienced, threw him into a severe illness, which yet did not soften the severity of his mother: she treated him with as much coolness as before. Thus Potemkin, by his perfidious suggestions, and Catharine, by irritating the mind of the unfortunate Paul, prepared, unawares, the tyranny and agitations of a reign which had the most serious and perhaps the most disastrous influence upon the fate of the Russian empire.

CHAP. XI.

While Potemkin is engaged with the Turks, Sweden declares war against Russia.

If Potemkin had been anxious to provoke a war with the Turks, he was not less desirous to avoid hostilities with a neighbouring power, which would only cause a useless waste of blood and money. The Russian finances were in so deplo-

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rable a state, that it was highly important not to increase their embarrassment. Independently of the war-expences which exhausted her treasures, the Empress had too carelessly left it at the disposal of her minister and of her lover. Potemkin and Momonoff were both allowed freely to draw upon the exchequer; and both of them made the most extravagant use of this permission. The former, it is true, devoted the greater part of the sums he drew to the service of the state; but with his usual prodigality: and the Empress, who was well acquainted with his proneness to this vice, ought doubtless to have checked him with greater severity. As for Momonoff, his expences were as idle as excessive; and for this very reason so much the more inexcusable. More than once had the Empress been importuned with the noisy demands of his creditors: but Momonoff, presuming on his ascendancy over her Majesty, always made a jest of the reproaches with which she so justly upbraided him; and prevailed with her to pay enormous debts, which he constantly incurred anew. Not only had these depredations exhausted the exchequer, but they had also occasioned a distress for which there was no remedy. All metallic money had disappeared from the provinces: nothing was seen in circulation but a depreciated paper-currency; and the subjects were not able to come to the

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assistance of the state. The exchange with foreign countries, owing to the depreciated national currency, was of course extremely unfavourable; and Russia enjoyed no credit whatever with the opulent nations of Europe. And yet there was no resource left but to raise a loan in foreign countries, since none could be obtained at home. Nine millions of gilders were borrowed in Holland; Genoa, Venice, and Florence, promised a few millions. A loan was also expected to be raised in the states of Brabant; but their sovereign, Joseph the Second, was not less embarrassed than Catharine, and wanted all the money that could be raised for himself. It was under all these disastrous circumstances that Sweden, in the spring of 1788, declared war against Russia.

As a nation, Sweden had the greatest motives of resentment against Russia for past injuries, and every thing to dread from her overgrown power and boundless ambition. But the war originated more in circumstances peculiar to the king. On his accession to the throne, Gustavus III. had found his nation agitated by parties, and felt the humiliation of wearing a crown which no longer inspired any respect. France and Russia had long since maintained two factions in Sweden, which, in contempt of honour and patriotism, openly acknowledged as chiefs the respective ambassadors of these two powers. The

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adherents of Russia strove to limit the prerogatives of the crown, as being the most likely way to weaken Sweden, the proximity of which made her dread the increase of her power. Instigated by exactly opposite reasons, the French party endeavoured to extend the royal prerogatives: it was highly important to France that the king of Sweden should be powerful enough to overawe Russia, and to check her ambition in the North. The French court had, generally, more friends among the commoners; and that of Russia, among the nobles: and this will be found extremely natural, if we consider, that in every European government, the constitution of which is founded upon the feudal hierarchy, the nobility has a powerful interest to diminish the influence of the throne for the purpose of increasing its own. Catharine was not unacquainted with this state of things. She knew that the Swedish nobility was factious, and that the constitution of the kingdom rendered it easy to circumscribe the monarch in the exercise of his authority. She accordingly exerted herself to keep these dispositions alive; and was peculiarly attentive to avail herself of any favourable opportunity for increasing the preponderance which she wished to acquire in Sweden.

Gustavus, in the mean time, was struggling against these attempts. To avoid becoming the

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slave of one party, he necessarily became dependent on the other. He was obliged to seek the protection of France and England, and to place himself, as it were, under the guardianship of these two powers, that he might be more certain of their support. Such a situation must always be disagreeable to a sovereign: yet it becomes less painful when the influencing power is at a distance. Between two obnoxious parties, Gustavus had certainly chosen the least dangerous.

There was nothing, in fact, that this monarch had more to dread, than the insolent yoke under which the nobles of his country pretended to bend him. He exerted all the faculties of his mind to concert a way of breaking these dishonourable claims; and succeeded in the bold attempt. At the moment when the factious were least expecting the blow that menaced them, Gustavus effected a revolution at Stockholm with a single regiment and a few noblemen who had remained faithful to their king. Being master of the capital, he soon gained all Sweden, and re-established the royal authority in the plenitude of its rights. The Empress startled on hearing of this event, which Count Osterman, her ambassador at the Swedish court, had neither foreseen nor prevented. The blow was the more fatal, as the new state of things might render Sweden formidable at a time when the projects of the cabinet

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of St. Petersburgh must have made it dread an increase of enemies. Catharine and her minister dissembled their vexation. They thought it would be better to keep up the appearance of friendship and good faith with Sweden, and in the mean time to strive underhand to destroy this new regal power, and to restore the factions by which it might either be repressed or weakened.

To accomplish this, Potemkin had recourse to intrigue. He endeavoured to excite a revolt in the Swedish provinces that bordered upon Russia; because, in case of success, it would have been more easy to support the insurgents. By means of bribes and promises, he won over all the discontented that were in Sweden, and augmented their numbers. In proportion as he saw the Russian party gaining strength in Sweden, he displayed more boldness and resolution. The Russian ambassador at Stockholm, who was instructed by both the Empress and her minister, in a short time overstepped all bounds. He had the impudence to intermeddle in the affairs of government, boldly countenancing the noblemen who were in opposition to the court; and, to weaken the respect of his subjects, he even made free with the foibles of the monarch, and turned them into ridicule. In short, he pursued his intrigues with so much perseverance, ardour, and audacity, that he instigated the senate to revolt. Gustavus,

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justly irritated, demanded the recall of this minister. Catharine dared not to refuse compliance: but she appointed Count Andrew Rajumoffski to succeed M. de Markoff; well knowing that he would carry his insolence as far as his predecessor had done.

Russia did not seem in the least afraid of exasperating the Swedish monarch. They fancied at Petersburgh that the patience of Gustavus was inexhaustible. Baron de Sprengporten, a native of Finland, formerly the friend of the king of Sweden, sold himself to Catharine, openly avowed his enmity to Gustavus, and went over to Russia. The picture which he drew of the interior of his native country, and of the spirit which prevailed among his countrymen, confirmed the court of Russia in the opinion that it might attempt any thing against the monarch of Sweden. This system was embraced with renovated ardour. It was supposed, that to keep up dissensions in Sweden was an infallible way to render that kingdom for ever dependent on Russia. At the very time when the cabinet of St. Petersburgh was perfectly convinced of the efficacy of these measures, and when all the troops had been marched with the most complete security against the Turks, Gustavus declared war, and advanced from Swedish Finland into Russian Finland, threatening Petersburgh itself.

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Never was astonishment equal to that of Catharine. Had not this courageous princess exercised over herself an empire which absolutely concealed the situation of her mind, it might perhaps have been seen that her fears were as great as her surprise.

The war, however, might have been ended almost as soon as declared. Gustavus was too little accustomed to any concessions on the part of Russia not to have consented to restore peace, if Catharine had recalled the ambassador with whom he was dissatisfied, banished from her court the rebellious Swedes, and promised not to interfere any more in the transactions between the Swedish nation and their sovereign. Indeed it is probable that he had resorted to war for the mere purpose of establishing peace on a more solid foundation.

Catharine, for the sake of maintaining a good understanding, would readily have given some satisfaction to Sweden; but her council was of a different opinion. Count Tchernichef, who was at the head of the naval department, had then some influence. The war with Sweden was likely to be more a maritime than a continental war: and he indulged hopes of shedding fresh splendour over his department. He therefore voted for war, promised splendid victories, magnified the insolence of the Swedes, and inflamed

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the pride of the Empress, whose dignity, in his eyes, had been daringly trampled upon. His opinion was seconded by several other members of the council; and it prevailed. The minister of finances was the only one who opposed it with firmness. He was better acquainted than any one with the weak side of the question; but perhaps he dared not to reveal all he knew. His arguments were not considered of sufficient force, and Catharine more readily determined for war, as the enemy was most pressing.

Already was the king of Sweden marching in person upon Fredericksham, a frontier-town of Russia, towards Swedish Finland. After the conquest of this place, there would remain none more to arrest the enemy as far as Petersburgh. The Empress could only dispose of a few invalids and some detachments of her guards. She left the summer-palace of Czarskoezelo, where she did not think herself safe, to shut herself up in her metropolis. She even ordered horses to be kept in readiness to remove her to Moscow: but still her countenance was perfectly serene. She calmly declared that the horses which she had ordered were for the more speedy conveyance of soldiers and artillery.

At least, it is certain that, always superior to danger when it approached, the Empress, whatever might have been her fears about the issue of

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the war, far from losing her recollection for a single moment, did every thing that could possibly be done to insure success to her cause. She at first could send to Finland only a corps of eight thousand men, badly armed and imperfectly organized, and yet, in her reply to the declaration of the king of Sweden, she proclaimed that, having long since foreseen this rupture, she had put her frontier-towns into the best state of defence. While by her firmness she maintained the tranquillity and serenity of her subjects, her gold and her intrigues were sowing disturbances and divisions among those of Gustavus. Although she had reinforced the army of Finland as expeditiously as it could be done, and entrusted its command to General Michelson, who had already acquired great military reputation; it is yet true that she owed her first success more to treachery than to valour. Her squadron defeated that of the Swedes at Hogland, because the commanders of the Swedish vessels failed in the performance of their duty; and under the very walls of Fredericksham several Swedish regiments laid down their arms, and refused to march even at the voice of their king, because some rebellious officers, bribed by Russia, persuaded them that Gustavus was violating the privileges and the constitution of their country, by undertaking an offensive war without the consent of the states of the kingdom.

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Potemkin, whose attention was engrossed by the war with Turkey, received with heart-felt sorrow the intelligence of the rupture with Sweden. He vented loud reproaches against the Empress, and accused her council of imbecility and want of foresight. Potemkin, as an able warrior, dreaded a diversion, which, by obliging Russia to divide her forces, must weaken her on all points. As a wise politician, he thought it would be better to negociate with Sweden, and to appease her by shewing her for the moment some condescension (as a different treatment might be resumed at any other time), rather than fight her as an enemy, and derange by these insignificant hostilities the plan of a war from which the greatest advantages were to be expected. Lastly, viewing things as an ambitious man, to whom no means appear sufficiently adequate when he wants to satisfy his passion, he felt hurt at being probably forced by this occurrence to spare some of the troops which he had intended to employ against the Turks. He called the war with Sweden an *old woman's war*, pretended that the garrison of Petersburgh was sufficient to carry it on, and persisted in disposing of the remaining forces of the empire for his own designs; but the Empress formally opposed his caprice, and ordered troops to march to the Swedish frontier.

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The Russian army was however numerous enough to meet two enemies. According to the list which Potemkin published in 1788, it amounted to five hundred thousand men. But this number, supposing even that it was not magnified, did not refer exclusively to men actually under arms: regiments were stated as complete, which were yet waiting for their recruits, and these recruits were slowly arriving. The whole number of men enlisted did not reach the corps for which they were destined, because several of them died on the roads. However, it was not of soldiers that the army experienced the greatest want; it was deficient in arms, ammunition, and clothes. All this proceeded from the defects in the administration, which had their principal origin in the impetuous and despotic temper of Potemkin; who sometimes was uncommonly active, and sometimes indulged in the most excessive indolence. In spite of the advantage which would have resulted from it for his own success, he neglected to put the army of the Ukraine into a good condition, because it was commanded by Marshal Romanzoff. His hatred to this general surmounted even his own interest in a matter of the greatest consequence, namely, that of being well seconded in his movements and operations. He left Romanzoff's army in a state of want, which paralysed the Marshal's

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efforts. Besides, the changes which Potemkin had effected in the army had been introduced with precipitation; and war having taken place, there had been no time left to consolidate and bring them to maturity. The consequence was, that the troops were not sufficiently instructed in the new manœuvres; that several corps, which had changed their weapons, like the hussars who had been converted into light dragoons, went badly through the service, with which they were not familiar. The artillery in particular, which, more than any other corps, wants instruction and theory, and is of no utility in war unless it has been well prepared in time of peace, felt the effects of a yet very imperfect organization; and its services would perhaps have offered a very humiliating contrast against any other enemy than the Turks. All these imperfections, which might have become sources of weakness, threatened the Russians with a disastrous campaign, had not the energy of Potemkin counteracted them, by giving his army a vigorous impulse which rendered these obstructions less sensible.

While Russia was successfully carrying on two wars which her ambition had provoked, Catharine and her minister, judging that Europe would not remain an indifferent spectatrix of this double struggle, intrigued in every court, and strengthened or relaxed the ties with other powers accord-

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ing to their different interests. The Emperor was still the most faithful ally of Russia. He hoped to share with her the fruits of the victories which the two powers were to gain together. Joseph the Second, who, through the union of his house with that of France, had at that time the greatest preponderance in the cabinet of Versailles, was negociating an alliance between the courts of Paris and St. Petersburgh; which, if it had taken place, would have subjected Europe to the yoke of France, Austria, and Russia. Fortunately, the greatest obstacle to this arrangement was raised by Potemkin. Knowing that this triple alliance would not be agreeable to England, and not wishing to offend a power whose fleets might have prevented his sending to the Archipelago the expedition against Constantinople, he preferred the substantial advantages of the conquest of Turkey (which he thought certain) to the vague and unprofitable honour of holding Europe in chains; and used all his influence over the mind of Catharine, to hinder the conclusion of the treaty proposed by Joseph the Second. This refusal of Russia cooled the Emperor; who, being harassed with his own affairs and the disturbances of his dominions, prosecuted the war against the Turks with much less vigour. It irritated the king of France, who ordered his ambassador at Petersburgh to declare that he

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should support Gustavus his ally, and would not suffer the overthrow of the constitution established in Sweden by that monarch. It tranquillised England and Prussia; which powers now felt better disposed to offer their mediation for the pacification of the North, and to throw less obstacles in the way of the designs of Russia in other parts. All Europe wished to see an end put to this Northern quarrel, of which the Belligerents themselves began to be tired. Potemkin, who had always censured the war with Sweden, and only wished to pursue the Turkish war unmolested, had no reason to repent of the advice which he had given to Catharine in this delicate conjuncture.

This minister, always profound in his plans, and whose genius would have been perfect had he been equally skilful in conducting them in the details, as in comprehending their great outlines, had formed upon Poland a design somewhat different, for the glory and interest of Russia, from that which was executed shortly after his death by the statesmen who succeeded him. Far from subduing and dismembering that country, Potemkin wished to make it an ally of Russia, and under this specious title to direct the forces and resources of that kingdom, which thus would have been entirely at his disposition; while, by the partition that took place, Russia lost the

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advantages which she might have drawn from the fine provinces that were ceded to Austria and Prussia. The weakness of the Polish government, the anarchy which prevailed in that country, and which Russia would have taken care to keep up, would have disabled the Poles from ever refusing to comply with the measures suggested by their formidable neighbour; and Russia, as a friend, would have derived more benefit from Poland than either as an enemy or as her supreme ruler. Potemkin was sensible of this. In the beginning of the war, he had proposed to the diet, whose principal members he had won over to his interest, to make a common cause with Russia against the enemies of the Christian name. A free passage for her troops, abundance of provisions, cattle and horses, which she might have procured at a small expence in Poland; the recruits which she might have raised there, independently of the troops furnished by the Republic, were advantages which this alliance would have insured to Russia. The negociation was for a long time kept secret; but by an imprudence, of which it is difficult to guess the cause, the cabinet of Petersburgh officially acquainted the cabinet of Berlin with the treaty it was going to conclude. On hearing this, Potemkin could not contain his rage. He vehemently reproached the Empress with the incapacity of her ministers,

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who profited by his absence to lose the fruit of his cares and combinations. His anger was just. The king of Prussia hastened to make strong representations at Warsaw concerning the danger of the alliance into which Russia was drawing Poland. He prevailed with the Republic to maintain her independence, and promised his assistance to that effect. In the mean time, Potemkin wanted a passage for his troops across the Polish territory. He was forced to negociate for this single object, which would have been one of the first conditions of the treaty; and this passage, which was not judged likely to have been disputed, was granted only on the express promise of making the Russian troops observe the strictest discipline, and of paying dearly for every commodity they might stand in need of.

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CHAP. XII.

Potemkin takes Oczakof, places his troops in winter-quarters, and returns to Petersburgh.

Intent upon his main design, Potemkin had made vast preparations to open the campaign of 1788, against the Turks, in a brilliant manner. The object of this campaign was, by different movements and positions, to keep the Turkish army at a distance for the purpose of laying siege to Oczakof, an important fortress of Bessarabia on the Black Sea, near the mouth of the Dnieper, now the bulwark of the Russian, as it formerly was of the Ottoman empire, which secures the tranquil possession of Little Tartary and the Crimæa. His preparations were however not finished in the month of April. The Prince de Ligne reproaching him with his tardiness, Potemkin, a quarter of an hour after, secretly caused a messenger to arrive with the news of a victory in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus. His lofty mind was not ashamed to descend to such pitiful contrivances.

In the month of May, the head-quarters of the army of the Ukraine were removed from Kief to the banks of the Dniester. This move-

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ment induced the Turks to quit the frontiers of Poland to get nearer Yassy: but a corps of Austrians followed them in this retrogade march; captured many of their guns and a great deal of baggage; and having met Prince Ypsilanti, hospodar of Moldavia, who was flying from Yassy, they dispersed his escort and took him prisoner.

The army of Potemkin marched in two divisions. The first remained under his immediate command; the second, under the orders of two lieutenants-general, Paul Potemkin and Samoïloff, crossed the Bog, and advanced on the right shore of that river; whilst the former marched on the left. Towards the end of May, the troops occupied the camp of Novo Gregori, where Potemkin received the news of the first victory of Prince Nassau over the Capitan Pacha. He on this occasion said to the Prince de Ligne: "That "comes from heaven! Look at that church: I "dedicated it to St. George, my patron; and the "affair of Kinburn took place the day after St. "George's festival." After having encamped a few weeks, and performed several retrogade movements, the two divisions towards the end of June formed a junction. When Potemkin heard of two more victories of Prince Nassau, he again said to the Prince de Ligne: "Well, my friend! "what did I tell you of Novo Gregori? There

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" he is again. Is it not evident that I am God's " spoiled child?—What a good fortune! The " garrison of Oczakof is running away. I shall " begin to march immediately"—and the troops were set in motion; but instead of marching directly to Oczakof, Potemkin passed three days on the river, stopped every where to take and to eat fish, and paid a visit to the victorious fleet.

The approach of the Russian army had occasioned great movements in the Turkish fleet, which was riding at anchor under the walls of Oczakof. It consisted of sixteen ships of the line. That of the Russians sailed from Cherson under the orders of Prince Nassau and Commodore Paul Jones. It bore directly upon the Turks, to drive them from the coast and prevent their obstructing the operations of the army. A brisk engagement took place. The Prince de Nassau was at first obliged to give way to the fire of the Turks; but he was soon supported by Paul Jones; while the Turkish fleet was also receiving a reinforcement, commanded by the old Capitan Pasha. The combat was renewed with fresh ardour; but the victory remained with the Russians. The Turks took to flight with a loss of three gallies, and the Russian fleet went to attack the very same walls which her enemy had been protecting the day before.

But the Turkish fleet was not annihilated; it

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reappeared a few days after. The fate of Oczakof depended, however, on the destruction of this fleet. The Russians, once masters of the sea, would prevent any succour being thrown into the place by water; and the army under Potemkin's command was posted in such a manner as to deprive the Ottomans of all hopes of throwing any ammunition and provisions into that important fortress by land. Under these circumstances, a council of war was held on the 16th of June, on board of the Russian fleet; and the resolution was taken to give battle to the Turks on the day following. Accordingly, on the 17th of June, at four o'clock in the morning, the Russian fleet commenced the attack in a most undaunted manner. During the night, the Russians had had the good fortune to receive a reinforcement of two-and-twenty gun-boats, which were sent to them from Krementschuk. Their fire was dreadful. The Turks defended themselves with heroic courage: but the talents of the two adversaries were not equal; they were fighting on an element where science decides the victory. After an obstinate engagement of five hours, the Turkish fleet was dispersed: several vessels were blown up, others wrecked on the coast. Numbers of the crews escaped in boats, but they were received on land by the troops of Suwareff's division; and all who escaped from the ships were either killed

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or made prisoners. The Turks lost fifty-seven vessels of different sizes; among which was the admiral's ship of sixty guns; and six thousand men killed or taken. Two frigates, two brigs, a galley, and several other small vessels, were sunk: but of the great number of vessels that fell into the hands of the Russians, there was but one ship of fifty guns fit for service. The Russians did not lose a single vessel; and their loss in men was inconsiderable, because the Turkish artillery was so badly served that it scarcely did any execution.

In the mean time, Potemkin's army, moving in different columns, had insensibly approached Oczakof, and invested the town with an immense line of circumvallation. Potemkin was encamped on the shores of the Dnieper three miles from the place. From this camp, which was called *the Camp of the Deserts*, he wrote to the Empress, that he did not yet intend to begin the siege; but, to spare the effusion of blood, he would endeavour to take the fortress by surprise, or to prevail with the Turks to capitulate. Some skirmishes took place between the Russian troops that were sent to reconnoitre the fortress, and those of the Turkish garrison who made sorties to get provisions, or to intercept the convoys of the enemy.

The Austrian troops were however less inactive.

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A corps, under the command of the Emperor, took Sabatsch. The Prince de Ligne, on informing Potemkin of this victory, urged him at the same time to make a false attack on one side of Oczakof, and on the other to leap into the intrenchments, to enter pell-mell with the garrison into the old citadel, and thus to carry the place. "Do you think," replied Potemkin, "it is like "your Sabatsch, defended by one thousand men, "and taken by twenty thousand?" This was one of Potemkin's exaggerations. The attack had been made by two battalions led on by the Emperor, whose vigour Prince de Ligne advised the Russian commander-in-chief to imitate. The next day, when Potemkin was inspecting a battery of sixteen guns, which he had raised in an open field at a distance of one hundred and sixty yards from the intrenchments, he remembered his conversation of the preceding day; and while a shower of cannon-balls fell near him, and killed close to him an artillery-driver and his two horses, he with a smile said to Count Branicki:—"Ask "the Prince de Ligne, whether his Emperor's "bravery at Sabatsch was greater than mine "here?"—This false attack was indeed a hot one; and no person could be more nobly and more cheerfully courageous than Potemkin at times. This fit of courage continued for three or four days, during which he exposed himself to the

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greatest danger. Prince de Ligne observed to him, that "cannon-balls were the best remedy to cure his ill-humour." The Russians several times lost and recovered the Bashaw's gardens.

On the 29th of July, forty or fifty Turks came along the sea-shore, and, climbing the acclivity, fired upon a battery where Prince Anhalt had just relieved General Chotousoff, who had been wounded the night before. The light-infantry strove to be revenged for the wound of their general. Without waiting for the orders of Prince Anhalt, they rushed upon those forty Turks; who were soon reinforced by more than three hundred of Hazan Pasha's soldiers. To save the first, Anhalt was obliged to advance with the second battalion; he drove the Turks back after a very obstinate fight. Hardly had he re-entered the intrenchment, when more than two thousand Turks advanced with flying colours. Anhalt rallied his troops with great difficulty, and again attacked the Turks; hundreds of whom, concealed in the crevices of the mount, fired without ceasing, and could not be dislodged. At length Prince Nassau, who had in vain waited for orders, had the threefold pleasure of saving the battery and Prince Anhalt, and of being revenged on Prince Potemkin, to whom he apologized in his report for having advanced with three gun-boats, and forced the Turks to a retreat

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without his orders. One hundred and eighty Russians were killed in this affair; and within seven weeks, though the siege was not actually begun, Potemkin lost more than twelve hundred men.

It was, no doubt, with the view of sparing human blood, that Prince Potemkin had recourse to artifice and money. He imagined the Turks wished to surrender. After a great cannonading from the fleet of the Capitan Pasha, some Turkish boats approached the coast, to take soundings in the Black Sea. Potemkin supposed they wanted to desert, and thought he already beheld them converted into good Christians: but they fired upon the Russians. His indolence and inactivity often proceeded from his firm belief in predestination. He had ordered a trial of new mortars, and wanted to go on board the vessel in which the experiment was to be made: but there was no boat ready for him, his orders having been forgotten. The experiment commenced, and proved successful. It was however supposed that some of the enemy's boats, drawn up under the walls of Oczakof, were unmooring to attack the Russian vessel. The crew of the sloop prepared for defence. In this hurry the gunpowder spread on the deck, and, covered with a sail, was forgotten: some of it was incautiously used to fire upon the enemy's boats: and the Russian

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vessel took fire. A lieutenant-colonel, a major, and sixty men were blown up. Potemkin would inevitably have shared their fate, "did not Heaven," said he immediately with much confidence and devotion, "entertain a particular regard for "me, and watch night and day for my preserva-"tion." Soon after this occurrence, a few men were lost against a sortie of the enemy. Potemkin wrapped his handkerchief, dipped in lavender-water, about his forehead, which was always a signal of a real or supposed head-ache; and sunk into one of his hypochondriac fits.

In the month of August, the Russians seemed to emerge all at once from their inactivity. Suwaroff, on his own authority, unexpectedly ordered his left to advance in four square battalions against the intrenchment of the right. Before he had got over half the ground, he found himself exposed to a tremendous fire, and lost a thousand men. As the Turks were moving from the intrenchment on the left, the Prince de Ligne hastened to the Russian general, who commanded the right wing, to induce him to leap into that intrenchment with his troops. He ardently wished it. The Prince de Ligne dispatched his two aides-de-camp to Potemkin to obtain leave to do so. Instead of returning an answer, he wept. His misplaced humanity made him regret the sacrifice of men, which such an enterprise

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demanded. Prince Repnin was ordered to march with the centre towards the intrenchment, to make a diversion, and to liberate Suwaroff. This movement was completely successful.

The Prince de Ligne endeavoured to keep up a good intelligence between Potemkin and Repnin by means of the Bible and Martinism. Potemkin highly respected the Bible, and Martinism had rendered Repnin as gentle as he used to be intractable. Both displayed uncommon courage in a boat in which Prince Nassau took them to reconnoitre Oczakof, close under the walls on the sea-side. They were saluted with grape-shot and cannon-balls.

The Austro-Russian troops, under the orders of the Prince de Cobourg and Count Soltikof, were in the mean time besieging Choczim, the key of Moldavia on the Polish frontier. As the advanced works did not appear susceptible of a vigorous defence, they were carried by assault at the very first reconnoitring. Sixteen hundred Turks were either killed or taken on this occasion. The besiegers then began to bombard the town, which was soon reduced to a most pitiful condition. Hands were wanting to extinguish the flames, and to resist the continual and spirited attacks of the allied troops, which were every day making a greater progress. At length the governor, not wishing to run the risk of an

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assault, consented to capitulate. The garrison of the town was allowed to withdraw to Bender; but all who were in the fortress surrendered prisoners to the Austro-Russians. One hundred and fifty-three heavy guns, fourteen mortars, and a large stock of ammunition and provisions, became the prey of the conquerors, and served as instruments for new conquests.

Potemkin still continued inactive before Oczakof. His negociations and his bribes met with no success. The frequent sorties of the garrison, the bloody skirmishes which they occasioned, the bad season which was rapidly advancing, the mire into which the troops were sinking, rendered at last the diminution of his army extremely sensible. Towards the end of October, he had only two lieutenants-general left, who relieved each other in the trenches. The Prince de Ligne, tired of this state of affairs, resolved to leave Potemkin. He entertained him with a grand dinner, to which he came in his regimentals; which was so unusual, that the Prince de Ligne said to him,—"What, without your green cloak, "Prince! this must be a sign of disgrace." He declared, at the same time, that he would wait until the festival of his saint, Gregory; who, he hoped, would again perform some miracle in his behalf, and that he should leave the camp the day after, which was the twelfth of October.

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Potemkin answered, he was waiting for a frigate. She came not; but St. Gregory's day came. He neither attacked, nor thought of attacking. To divert himself and his patron, he wanted to take a Turkish ship on his festival. The ship was not taken. All the day he was plunged in a gloomy melancholy, and in the evening the Prince de Ligne left him, to go to the army of Marshal Romanzoff; and to stimulate him to greater exertions, he told him, on parting, that if he would send troops to the shores of the Black Sea as far as the Danube, and order Romanzoff to advance towards Bulcharest, he would get him named hospodar of Moldavia and Wallachia. "What do I care for that?" replied Potemkin. "I might be king of Poland, if I chose. I "refused the duchy of Courland. I am much "more than all that."

At length, after having received considerable reinforcements for his army, which the snow and ice, and the sicknesses attendant on a camp in the mire had sensibly diminished, Potemkin, convinced of the fallacy of his ideas respecting the inclination of the Turks to surrender, determined upon attacking and taking Oczakof by storm. This enterprise was dreadful, no doubt; and would cost much blood. But would not twice as many men have perished, the victims of cold, hunger, and evils of all kinds, if he had

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continued all the winter under the walls of the place? and those men whom fatigue and distress would have doomed to an early grave, would they not have perished without glory? War is an evil; it is the most frightful of plagues; religion and morality ought to impel princes to avoid it; but when once engaged in it, either by necessity or through culpable ambition, it is obvious, that, to be tardy and over-circumspect in the prosecution of a war, does but increase its horrors.

Potemkin had for some time been master of the island of Berezan, situated at the mouth of the Dnieper; which being provided with a strong tower, had till then offered a secure retreat to the Turkish vessels, whence they could from time to time throw some little succour into the place, and revive the drooping courage of the garrison. He entrusted general Ribas with this expedition; who successfully accomplished his object. It had indeed been judged so important, that great rewards and gratifications had been bestowed upon the troops that were employed. Eight officers, who had particularly distinguished themselves, were presented with gold swords of the value of eight hundred roubles each, bearing this inscription,—"The reward of valour."

As soon as the siege commenced, Marshal Romanzoff had ordered general D'Elmpt to march

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along the Pruth as far as Ganya. General Soltikoff, after the surrender of Choczim, had marched to Belji. These different movements enabled the Russians to keep the Turks at bay on the Danube, and to cover the siege of Oczakof.

Not to lose the advantage of these successful movements, it was now of the most urgent necessity to hasten the assault. In one of the councils of war holden for this purpose, the Prince de Nassau offered, if he might be entrusted with the operation, to effect in the weakest part of the fortress (which he had descried) a breach sufficiently large for a whole regiment to pass through. Potemkin, who could not tolerate any boasting in his presence, though the event might have justified the Prince's offer, asked him sarcastically, how many breaches he had effected at Gibraltar? This ill-timed raillery hurt the Prince de Nassau so much, that he complained of it to the Empress; solicited his recall; and was actually withdrawn from Potemkin's army, to be employed against the Swedes.

Although the proud Potemkin listened with so little moderation to the opinion of his general officers, he yet spared no pains to render himself agreeable to the soldiers, whose attachment he deemed more necessary for his design of storming Oczakof. His behaviour however, was not guided by wise principles: he not only endea-

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voured to stimulate the emulation and courage of the troops, by promising to allow them to plunder the town, but he also tolerated a complete insubordination for the purpose of attaching the troops to his person by this excessive indulgence. From that moment, all discipline disappeared. The excesses of the Russian soldiers (who never need much encouragement to disorder) were carried to such a height, that their officers dared hardly to remonstrate with them, much less restrain them by any punishment.

Potemkin however succeeded in his views. He did not suffer the ardour of the troops to abate. After having reconnoitred all sides of the fortress, formed his plan of attack, and marked the points by which the troops were to enter, he, on the sixth of December, 1788, at six o'clock in the morning, commenced the assault. The army marched in six columns. Four, under Prince Repnin, were to attack Oczakof on the east side; and the two others, under the command of General Muller of the artillery, were to storm the west side at the same time. He kept, besides, two corps-de-reserve in readiness to support the assailants.

The fire of the besieged Ottomans was terrible. They were sensible that this was to be a decisive blow, and that they ought to neglect nothing to ward it off. But in spite of their obstinate

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resistance, General Pahlen carried with the first column the fort of Hazan Pasha, situated on a hill; and soon after, another, which also looked over the town. The second column, commanded by General Baïkof, penetrated into one of the suburbs, and took possession of the road which leads from the town to the citadel. The third, braving a murderous fire of grape-shot, which scattered death in its ranks, leaped into the ditches; and Colonel Markof, at the head of the chasseurs, planted a ladder, and was the first upon the ramparts. Prince Volkonski, who commanded this column, was killed.

In the mean time, the fourth and fifth columns having sallied from the covered way, crossed the ditches, and threatened the ramparts, caused a serious alarm to the enemies, and obliged them to divide their attention and their forces. As the ditch was uncommonly deep on the spot where these columns made their attack, they had not been able to cross it without a heavy loss: but neither this obstacle, nor the brisk fire of the besieged, nor the blowing up of some mines, had been able to arrest the impetuosity of the Russians. While the men of the fifth column were perishing in the ditch, their bodies formed a bridge for the sixth, which, under the orders of General Samoilof, reached the ramparts and possessed itself of the bastions.

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Driven from the fortifications, caught between two fires, and more closely pressed in proportion as they retreated, the Turks had no other resource left but to take refuge in the houses of the inhabitants. This always proves a vain and dreadful resource: without saving the garrison, it exposes the unfortunate inhabitants to be slaughtered together with the soldiers. The Turks fought desperately both on the ramparts and in the streets. The Russian troops, naturally ferocious, exasperated by an obstinate resistance, and stimulated alike by the passion of vengeance and the desire of booty, spared neither sex nor age, and butcheredall who were of the race of the conquered. They did more; they tormented their victims, and inflicted upon many an excruciating death. The number of killed Ottomans was so considerable, that they could not find room to bury them. They were piled in carts, taken out of the town, and thrown upon the ice to be devoured by dogs. The slaughter lasted three days. But let us draw a veil over scenes of riotous barbarity, and applaud those nations, who, conducting war upon principles of humanity, subject those only to pain and death, who have made it their profession to encounter them; but protect the unarmed inhabitants of their adversaries' country against the horrors of storming assaults, and the

effects of a vengeance which they have not provoked.

According to Potemkin's calculations, eight thousand three hundred and seventy Ottomans lost their lives during the assault, and eleven hundred and forty died of their wounds, besides the inhabitants of both sexes who were butchered. The booty of the Russians was immense. Prince Potemkin presented the Empress with an emerald found at Oczakof, of the size of an egg, cut in the form of an oblong square, and of a fine proportion, though not absolutely pure. Catharine afterwards wore it in a necklace set with diamonds.

The Russians found at Oczakof three hundred and ten heavy guns and mortars. Among the prisoners of war, there were a Pasha with three tails, three commanders of gallies, having the rank of Pashas with two tails, and four hundred and forty-eight other superior officers.

In the account which Prince Potemkin gave of the loss of the Russians, he stated it at nine hundred and twenty-six privates, and thirty-one officers, three of whom were field-officers. It may easily be supposed that, according to custom, the loss of the conquerors was considerably under-rated. More accurate calculations have stated the number of Russians who perished in the storming of Oczakof at several thousands.

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The Rev. William Tooke says twelve thousand. But the whole siege, which lasted several months, must have cost them at least thirty thousand men. These, however, are results which ambition does not choose to avow.

It has been reported, that, during the brunt of the attack, Potemkin was in a place of safety, or at least out of the reach of the guns; and that, sitting on the ground with his head resting on his hands, he only lifted it up now and then fervently to ejaculate: "O Lord! have mercy upon us!" It is also said that as soon as the town was taken, he approached it with a triumphant smile, and immediately dispatched Colonel Bauer to carry this important news to Petersburgh. All this may be true: but the inference drawn from it, that Potemkin was deficient in personal courage, is a calumny. Of all deeds of war, there is perhaps none in which a commander-in-chief ought to be more careful not to mix with his soldiers, than in an assault. Of what service would his presence be on one spot, when every thing depends on the total effect; and when even one successful partial attack, far from being useful to the other troops, only exposes to certain destruction the courageous band that has alone accomplished its object, while those who were to cooperate with them have failed in their attempts? Before the storming of Oczakof, Potemkin had

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himself made his dispositions and given his orders. He neither could nor ought to have done more.

The officer whom Prince Potemkin dispatched to Petersburgh performed the journey with incredible expedition. In four days and a half he travelled over more than nine hundred miles. He arrived late at night at Petersburgh, and delivered his dispatches to Momonoff, to whom the Prince had addressed them. The Empress was in bed; but the favourite disturbed her sleep to acquaint her with such agreeable news. In the first paroxisms of her joy she shed tears. She immediately arose to write to the Grand-duke and some of her most intimate grandees these few words: "Oczakof is taken." The next day she addressed her court thus: "I was "ill, but these joyful tidings cured me." Colonel Baur received, as a reward for his zeal and dispatch, a gold snuff-box, set with diamonds, and containing one thousand ducats; and was appointed to the command of a regiment. After some few days, he was sent back to Oczakoff, and entrusted with the great order of St. George and its star in diamonds, and a sword richly set with brilliants of the value of sixty thousand roubles, for Prince Potemkin.

All the officers who had been employed in the taking of Oczakof, received gold medals, and the

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soldiers silver ones. These medals are worn by the Russian troops in the button-hole of their coats, with an orange and black striped ribband.

Although the Turks might long have anticipated the fall of Oczakof, the news yet spread the utmost consternation at Constantinople. After the first moments of stupor, the people became outrageous, and the grand-signior and his divan were very near falling victims to their fury. But returning soon to order, rather from apathy than out of respect for the laws, and resigning themselves to the decrees of fate more from weakness than urged by reason, the stupid Turks, both great and low, masters and slaves, sovereigns and subjects, forget this loss, and never thought of repairing it, nor of avoiding fresh losses.

While Constantinople was plunged in grief, joy reigned triumphant at Petersburgh; the hopes of the Russians rose with their success. The happiness of the hero of the victory which intoxicated the empire with joy, was at its utmost height. He only longed to return to Petersburgh to enjoy his triumph. He wanted, however, first to place his army and that of the Ukraine in winter-quarters. The army of the Ukraine had constantly kept the field; the Turks, it is true, dared no longer to shew themselves before the Russians in front, but they continually harassed them with their numerous cavalry; which occa-

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sioned frequent skirmishes, so much the more disagreeable, as they were not decisive. At length General Kamenski, who commanded the advanced-guard of this army, determined to put an end to this petty war. He formed his troops in three columns. His march was so rapid and so well combined, that he surrounded the Turks and forced them to battle near Kalkusta. The attack of the Russians was so vigorous, that the action did not last long. The Turks gave way on all sides, and escaping from the blows of their enemies by flight, more were taken prisoners than killed. They lost all their baggage and artillery, and were disabled from rallying for a long time. This battle ended the campaign of 1788. Potemkin stationed his infantry in Oczakof and Moldavia. He sent his cavalry beyond the Dniester, and, after having terminated these arrangements, set out for St. Petersburgh.

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CHAP. XIII.

Potemkin is splendidly received at St. Petersburgh, where he passes the winter in festivities and entertainments.—He returns to the army, to continue the war against the Turks.

THE brilliant campaign which he had achieved, and the important services which he had rendered to his sovereign and country, appeared to have placed Potemkin at the pinnacle of fortune and glory. He was of all Russians the most powerful, the most admired, the most wealthy, and the most feared. Nothing seemed to be wanting to his happiness, if appearances always corresponded with the reality, and if it were not the essential condition of happiness to have its principle in the calmness of the heart and in the testimony of a good conscience. It is this disposition of the soul which alone enables man to find a new source of happiness in the favours of fortune. This truth, so trite in theory, is little known in practice. Every day the man in power is punished by the secret anguish of his heart for the insulting parade of prosperity with which he crushes the vulgar; and yet the torments by

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which he is devoured, and which are frequently visible, do not render the ambitious who succeed him, more wise, nor the obscure crowd who witness his pangs, less envious.

The instability of worldly things is such, that, like the heavenly bodies whose motion is continual, though not sensible to our eyes, the lucky star of a human being can never remain steady at the top of the wheel of fortune. He who can no longer rise, must decline; this is an invariable law of our nature. We shall soon behold Potemkin placed in some degree under the influence of this law, and that without having deserved it more than any other favourite of fortune. It was precisely at a time when he had been most really useful, and when the impulse he had given to state affairs had been crowned with the most beneficial consequences to the empire, that he must have been sensible how much absence had impaired his credit with his sovereign, while it had constantly been upon the increase when he was rather an intriguing courtier than an excellent minister or an able general.

It was not, however, immediately after his arrival at Petersburgh that this change could be perceived. Catharine was magnanimous enough to stifle every little passion, when the glory of her throne and the interest of her dominions were

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concerned. She ordered the conqueror of Oczakoff to be received in a manner worthy of the brilliant success he had gained.

To give his reception the appearance of a triumph, the Empress ordered the road by which Potemkin was to arrive, to be illuminated for the space of six miles. When he entered the town, all the guns of the castle were fired; an honour exclusively granted to the sovereign herself. The Prince alighted at his palace, close to the imperial one. He had not yet finished changing his dress, when the Empress surprised him in his own apartment. She stayed a long time with him, and then repaired to the ball-room of her palace, where a brilliant court was expecting her Majesty. She appeared with the most cheerful countenance, and told the courtiers that she was just returning from Prince Potemkin; and that, by going first to visit him, she wished to shew how greatly she was satisfied with his services. But fifteen days were scarcely elapsed, when the courtiers who were most about her person, fancied they perceived that there was no longer such a cordial intimacy as formerly between her and her ancient favourite. It was well known, besides, that frequent misunderstandings had arisen between them in their epistolary correspondence. Potemkin had not been sufficiently aware that what passes in conversation may not always

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be written. Several times in his letters he had been guilty of opposing the Empress with vehemence, and of casting a bitter censure upon whatever had been done without his being consulted. And to support the enormous war expences, he had been obliged to ask for considerable sums. Such demands, which are always troublesome, had furnished the courtiers, who envied his favour, with pretences to paint him in the blackest colours to the Empress, and to excite her displeasure against him.

However, the behaviour of Catharine to her minister did not betray the least appearance of an incipient decline of favour. The successes obtained by the Prince in the last, warranted the hope of much greater advantages in the next campaign. The thought of conquering Greece was no longer fantastical, and of course it was proper not to offend him who had commenced and who was best able to achieve that important exploit. Catharine was sensible of this. She could not conceal from herself the need in which she stood of Potemkin. It was become habitual; his ascendancy was firmly established; and if in the secret of her heart the Empress was determined not to have any longer the same condescension for him in the distribution of dignities and favours, and the administration of her finances, she yet wanted him to be the greatest and most honoured of her

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subjects, and wished that the most flattering distinctions should be showered upon him, not less as a reward and encouragement, than to attach him to her person by the ties which she knew best calculated for her purpose. He had already received every mark of honour imaginable, the richest presents, dignities, estates, money and diamonds. To these donations Catharine added the kind condescension of giving brilliant entertainments, of which Potemkin was the hero. The principal grandees, to please their sovereign, imitated her example. For the space of two months, Petersburgh continued the theatre of the most splendid festivities. There was a general emulation in contriving whatever could most flatter the pride of the individual for whom the most extravagant expences were readily incurred. His principal exploits, and particularly the assault of Oczakof, were represented by dances, by music, and by fire-works. The arts vied to celebrate his glory; and yet he received all these homages either as mere marks of adulation, or as being due to him. He always appeared cold, and almost insensible to whatever was contrived for his gratification.

Such was his unfortunate disposition, that whatever was best calculated to delight and dazzle a mortal, disappeared from his sight, and even became insupportable, when the smallest secret

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trouble agitated his breast, and particularly when it was of a nature to hurt his pride. He was exasperated against Momonoff, whom he had supposed to be his friend, his devoted slave, and whom on his arrival at court he had seen assuming towards other courtiers a haughty demeanour, which, according to Potemkin, ill became him; and, what was still worse, pretending to a sort of equality with the Prince. This circumstance had so revolted his pride and his self-love, that he employed every means to determine the Empress to dismiss Momonoff; and her absolute refusal to comply with his demand raised his dissatisfaction and wrath to the highest pitch. Catharine was fond of her lover: she could not bring herself to sacrifice him to the whims of Potemkin: she had even made a merit of this refusal towards Momonoff. The latter, who feared the Prince, induced the Empress to appease his wrath by lavishing upon him the most flattering marks of favour and distinction. The Empress followed this advice. On Easter-eve, when, according to the religious ceremonies of the Greek church, the court was assembled in the imperial chapel, to assist at the divine service, every one was, at the end of it, admitted to kiss the hand of the Empress, and present their best wishes for her prosperity. Potemkin having first approached, Catharine, instead of suffering him to kiss her

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hand, tenderly embraced him, and in addition to this honourable expression of her regard, thanked him aloud for the important services he had rendered to her person and to the state. At the same time her Majesty adorned his neck with a diamond collar of the order of St. Alexander, worth sixty thousand roubles.

The Empress hoped that so much generosity and so many testimonies of attachment would at length induce Potemkin to set out for the army, without insisting any longer upon the dismissal of Momonoff, and without venturing any fresh demands of money for himself. But her expectations were disappointed. The month of May had commenced, and Potemkin obstinately persisted in staying; declaring that he would not leave Petersburgh without a sort of capitulation with his sovereign. He demanded, that, before his departure, Momonoff should be dismissed, another lover chosen, and himself furnished with six millions of roubles for the expences of the campaign he was going to open. In vain did he continue obstinate; Catharine this time was still more so. She granted the sum which he demanded; but she would not consent to the sacrifice of the affections of her heart. Potemkin, sensible that the season pressed, and that duty, honour, and necessity, equally urged him on, departed for the army in the middle of May

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1789, leaving, to his heart's sorrow, Momonoff in his situation, and carrying with him no other consolation than the promise of the Empress that she would not appoint her lover vice-chancellor of the empire, in the room of Count Osterman; a dignity to which Momonoff had long aspired.

This promise suited the interests of the Empress more than those of Potemkin. Momonoff was no ways proper for the eminent post to which he dared to pretend. His nomination would have been censured by the whole empire. Potemkin always gave Catharine the most judicious advice for the choice of individuals to be raised to important places. A just regard to propriety and to the dignity of his sovereign, joined to a principle of equity and attachment to the welfare of the state, attracted him towards men of merit, and made him wish to see them distinguished. Nature in this directed him better than his education. It certainly was not by the lessons of his teachers, nor by the examples of the world in which he had moved, that he acquired the notion of paying to merit the justice and honour which are its due. But he was gifted with the instinct of elevated souls. Pride, nobleness, and generosity, were born with him. The attentive observer will perceive, in the life of this celebrated man, that he was indebted for his virtues and

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good qualities to himself, but for his vices and faults to the prejudices of his nation, and to the manners, still tainted with barbarism, of the country in which he was born.

A short time before his departure for the army, he gave a proof of the correct judgment he manifested in the minor circumstances of life, which require more discernment than genius. Catharine, who harboured a deep resentment against the king of Sweden, and could not forgive him the war which he carried on against her, composed an opera, which she called "The Unskilful Warrior." The design of this performance was obvious. The Empress showered down ridicule upon the object of her hatred. She spared nothing to render the representation of this dramatic work splendid and brilliant. *Martini* composed the music. The ballet cost twenty thousand roubles to get up. The scenery, the dresses of the performers, the decorations of the house, would cost at least double the sum. Catharine wanted to have her play performed at the grand national theatre: Potemkin highly disapproved of this idea, and was not afraid of stating his disapprobation. He thought it would only serve to exasperate the king of Sweden, and to perpetuate the war. "I am," added he, "neither a judge nor "a critic, but I could wish the Empress had "chosen any other amusement." Out of regard

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for his opinion, the performance was postponed till after his departure; and the play was acted at the theatre of the Hermitage, where the public were not admitted. Potemkin shewed on this occasion, as he had done on many others, that Catharine could not be a loser by listening to him, though she commonly did not wish to have the appearance of regulating her conduct according to his advice. It is certain that, on a comparison of the life of Catharine with that of Potemkin, it may clearly be seen what Potemkin would have been without Catharine: but what this princess would have been without the man of genius whom she had judiciously chosen for her counsellor, is not quite so obvious. At least, it is evident that she did not perform any thing so great, and particularly so ably combined, either before or after him, as she did during his life-time.

Meanwhile Catharine, who so obstinately supported Momonoff against Potemkin, was really dissatisfied with her lover. She was disgusted with his frequent illnesses, and still more with the yoke which he dared to impose upon her. Not that Momonoff was unamiable: he was actually possessed of the means of pleasing, rather by the accomplishments of the mind than by exterior advantages, though his figure was extremely agreeable. He probably might have preserved his influence and his situation till the death of Ca-

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tharine, had he not himself occasioned his dismission by his imprudences. He affected to treat the Empress as a being over whom he had a sovereign empire. He was guilty of frequent infidelities; and he kept so little within the bounds of discretion in his intrigue with Princess Tcherbatof, that Catharine with her own eyes witnessed the perfidy of her lover. She dismissed him on the spot, and condemned him to marry his mistress. This was the only revenge she took of the ungrateful couple. The guilt of Princess Tcherbatof, loved and distinguished as she particularly was by her sovereign, was not less than that of Momonoff. The Empress loaded them with favours, but banished them from her presence, and ordered them to live at Moscow. Many persons were losers by Momonoff's disgrace. He was kind-hearted, easy of access, and generous. The Grand-duke, among others, had in him a faithful servant, eagerly availing himself of his influence to mitigate the unhappy situation of him who was some day to be his master, but who in the present moment had much less power than Momonoff. This circumstance honours alike the heart and the understanding of Momonoff. To shew himself kind to the heir of the throne, in their respective situations, announced a generous soul free from little fears and little passions. The Grand-duke was sorry for his misfortune.

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Momonoff must have been regretted alike by the court and the public, especially after his successor Plato Zubof had unfolded the vices of his character.

Potemkin learnt with much dissatisfaction the nomination of this young man to the situation of a favourite. The place had become extremely important. Catharine, as she advanced in years, suffered her lovers to have so great an ascendancy over her, that the individual who held that situation was no longer indifferent. The choice of Zubof had been the mere effect of chance. He happened to be on duty at Czarskoezelo, when the Empress, having just dismissed Momonoff, and her heart being yet filled with bitterness, wanted immediately to substitute another in his place. Count Soltikof presented Zubof, whom he knew from being a neighbour of his father in the country. Catharine accepted of him without hesitation, as she would have accepted of any other. As Potemkin, more particularly acquainted with the talents and disposition of the new favourite from the notes which were transmitted to him concerning every officer in the army, did probably not think him entitled to the high favour to which he was raised, he censured this choice, and was extremely angry at its having been made without his concurrence. The sequel proved that the sagacious statesman was not mis-

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taken. A report was circulated at the time, that he feared Zubof; it was owing to a pun which Potemkin had made upon his name. He had, it is said, commissioned an officer, whom he dispatched to the Empress on some particular occasion, to inform her Majesty that his health would be perfect if he could get rid of a *tooth* (in Russian *Zubof*), which caused him great pain. The anecdote may be true: but it does not follow that Potemkin, at the distance he was from Zubof, in every respect, should have feared in him a rival. It was however in vain that he solicited the Empress to dismiss this new favourite. Catharine insisted upon keeping him, because her favour was once fixed, and it would have been painful for her to make a new choice. Potemkin, who was then at a great distance from Petersburgh, and had his head filled with too weighty concerns to busy himself long about court-intrigues, hazarded no farther remonstrances. Catharine kept her lover, and soon grew warmly attached to him. The death of Potemkin, which happened a few years after, left Zubof without any competitor capable of balancing his credit; and from that moment he reigned sole and absolute master over the heart of his sovereign.

The war in the mean time was continuing its ravages. The diminution of the numbers of men became alarming, and the difficulty of raising

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recruits was already but too apparent. The Prince demanded not less than sixty-three thousand men to complete his army. The finances were still more exhausted than the population. The troops were not regularly paid, because cash was wanting. That useless and ruinous Swedish war had alone absorbed two-and-twenty millions of roubles. The naval expences and the repairs which the fleets required, made it probable that, if protracted, this war would soon cost twice as much. Alarmed at this prospect, the ministers of Catharine wished for peace; but her Majesty was not so inclined, and Potemkin still less. Animated by the conquest of Oczakof, they were both more obstinately than ever bent upon their favourite project of conquering Turkey. Personally irritated against the king of Sweden, the Empress would no more listen to any accommodation with that monarch than with the grand-signior. In this violent situation, recourse was had to a fresh issue of paper-currency; that fatal resource which, leaving all other nations mistresses of the exchange with Russia, gave them the opportunity of draining the empire of the little metallic money that was left, and entirely deprived it of that nerve and aliment of states.

With this want of specie, which would obstruct some operations and hinder the execution of many, several other difficulties were combined.

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Joseph the Second had just breathed his last, and his brother Leopold, who succeeded him, was alarmed at seeing the Austrian monarchy in a state of dissolution, Brabant revolted, Hungary breaking out in murmurs and threatening an insurrection, and Bohemia and Austria claiming their infringed privileges. He rightly judged that a foreign war was the height of misfortune for an empire whose forces had so little consistency as those of his monarchy. He had accordingly proposed an accommodation to the Turks, and was going to leave Russia alone, burthened with the whole weight of the war. On the other hand, the death of Joseph, by weakening the ties of particular friendship which existed between that prince and the court of Versailles, deprived that of Vienna of the influence it had over the politics of France. Besides, France was already witnessing the first ferment of that terrible revolution which overturned her constitution and her morality. Absorbed in the contemplation of her painful situation at home, France no longer extended her views to Europe: she was, as it were, severed from Europe. As her government was on the point of changing its character, her spirit, her system of foreign politics must also naturally be altered. The other powers were under the necessity of waiting for this change, before they could reckon upon the stability of any treaty with that

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power. Russia and Austria could no longer flatter themselves, as they had perhaps done in Joseph's time, of the co-operation of France to destroy the Ottoman empire in Europe. It was even uncertain whether France would continue to coincide with the designs of the courts of Petersburgh and Vienna upon an empire which was her ancient ally. While this new order of things was weakening the position of Russia towards Turkey, it gave more weight to the determination of the powers which did not wish for the ruin of the Turks. England and Prussia, which were especially interested in the preservation of the Ottoman empire as a guarantee of their own safety, succeeded in detaching Denmark from the alliance it had entered into with Russia to make war upon Sweden. The court of Copenhagen, at the opening of the campaign, apologized to that of Russia for its inability to furnish the contingent it had promised, and remained neuter. Catharine, knowing whence the blow came, was furious against England: but she was obliged to procrastinate her vengeance; and the French revolution having soon after altered the equilibrium of Europe, and changed the political system of the European powers, the Empress, far from avenging herself, drew closer her connection with a power which she would have annihilated, if able, a few years before.

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Russia was now left alone both in the war against the Swedes and in that against the Turks. Potemkin could not patiently think of this Swedish war, which deranged his vast designs against the Turks, because it necessitated a division of the forces of the empire. In order more quickly to remove an obstacle which he could no longer endure, he wanted to have the war terminated in less than one campaign, by destroying the very field of battle upon which the two powers were measuring their strength. "The Russians," said he, "must penetrate into Swedish Finland, depopulate and ravage that country, and render it so uninhabitable that the fiend of mankind himself would not be tempted to make it his residence." This violent advice was unfortunately followed. Three thousand Bashkirs were sent for from the borders of Tartary to be employed in the execution of the bloody decree against unhappy Finland. The Russians however had soon occasion to repent employing those half-savages. They treated Russian Finland as unmercifully as that part which belonged to Sweden, sacking, plundering and assassinating friends and foes indiscriminately. But this very insubordination rendered them formidable in battle. The Swedes had no other means to rid themselves of them than by laying snares, in which many were caught. Even the Russians are reported to

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have been obliged to recur to similar means for the purpose of diminishing the numbers of these barbarians, who were become troublesome and formidable to the very army by which they were employed. Certain it is, that but a few hundreds of those who had served in the campaign of Finland returned to their homes.

If Potemkin was dissatisfied with the advisers of Catharine for having so lightly engaged in a war with Sweden, he was not much better pleased with the conduct of the Russian ministers towards Poland. Exasperated by the vexations and insolent treatment which they experienced from the ambassadors of Russia and all the Russian agents both civil and military, and equally disgusted with the little attention that was paid at Petersburgh to their remonstrances and reclamations, the Poles every where broke out in open revolt, ready to avenge by force their violated privileges and dignity. This new quarrel was particularly ill-timed, as it might have opposed an invincible obstacle to the passage of the Russian troops through Poland, in their way to the armies collected against the Turks. Potemkin, fully aware of the importance of this passage, knew how dangerous it might be for his troops to be debarred from it. He overwhelmed the Empress with bitter reproaches about the ascendancy which she suffered her ministers to acquire, and the little

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moderation the latter observed in their conduct. He advised an immediate negociation with the republic of Poland, to restore the free passage which had been obstructed: but the Poles, being rendered sensible of their strength by the conciliatory measures to which Russia was forced to resort, and being besides secretly excited by Prussia, would comply with the demands of the court of St. Petersburgh only under certain restrictions. They stipulated, that the Russian troops should pass in small divisions; that one division should not set foot on the Polish territory before the other had quitted it on the opposite side; that the troops should be furnished with passports from the commanders of the frontier; and that they should pay for every article they might want on the road. The confederates of Poland declared, besides, their determination to observe the strictest neutrality during the war between Russia and Turkey; and required, accordingly, that the former should withdraw the magazines established in Poland; a measure which they considered necessary to their tranquillity, as the officers placed over those magazines were turbulent persons, who aimed at creating disturbances among the Poles. The Empress did not wish formally to bind herself to any compliance with this demand. She merely promised in general terms to spare the Polish nation; and shortly

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after she informed the states, that she had ordered Prince Potemkin to remove the Russian magazines which were in Poland, to the shores of the Dniester. This negociation was the last between the republic and its formidable neighbour. The Empress, who had perhaps already secretly sworn its destruction, was subsequently enabled to execute this design by her peace with the Sublime Porte, and the death of Potemkin. The Poles, who flattered themselves with having recovered their independency, but wanted a support, applied to Prussia, and met in the Prussian cabinet with men seduced by the court of St. Petersburgh, and equally covetous of the spoils of Poland. From this moment the Poles were doomed to lose the rank of an independent nation.

Potemkin had frequently threatened he would batter down the Ottoman power in two campaigns: but the concurrence of these harassing circumstances made him easily foresee that a third campaign would not accomplish his object, and that he must yet resolve to undertake it, lest he lose the fruit of his first conquests. Catharine entertained a similar opinion; and not only did her ambition find its account in the hope of seeing her power considerably increased by the success of his arms, but it appears that she seized with equal satisfaction the opportunity of keeping at a distance a man whose overbearing ascendancy

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she feared when he was near her. The painful sentiment which Catharine felt in this respect had its principle in human nature. Potemkin had long ceased to be her lover; he had even laid aside all gallantry with her, and was no longer anxious to please her. Occupied with deep-laid schemes and the most important interests, his mind was absorbed in the conduct of the war and the administration of the empire, over which he watched with unremitted care. He had no leisure to attend to trifling intrigues incompatible with weighty concerns and often prejudicial to their progress. Potemkin expressed his opinion bluntly, and wished it to be followed without obstacle and without delay. He was bitter in his declarations and remonstrances, in order to overawe the Empress, avoid all discussion, and be spared the denial to which a gentle and mild request is too frequently exposed. But Catharine, with all her magnanimity, was yet a woman. Potemkin took no pains to disguise the dominion which he pretended to assume over her; and Catharine, as soon as she perceived the yoke, felt disposed to resist it, though her reason convinced her that the demands which he so imperiously urged were just and founded upon evident utility. The life of Potemkin furnishes many instances of his directing her affairs, and the

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choice of some of her favourites and ministers. Such a struggle however must have been painful to Catharine, even when she triumphed. Potemkin, though forced to yield, never submitted but till after a long resistance; and Catharine dreaded the task of using her supremacy to bend the will of her imperious minister to her own. The absence of such a man procured her a tranquillity in the charms of which she was so much delighted, that she ardently wished for its continuation.

The Empress was particularly harassed by the excessive demands of money with which she was constantly assailed by Potemkin. He wanted for the campaign of 1789, which he was going to open, an extraordinary supply of eight millions of roubles, independent of the six millions destined for the maintenance of the army and the war-expences. These eight millions were to be devoted to bribe the members of the Divan to make them concede the points which Russia was desirous of carrying in the conferences that were to be held at Yassy; or, if the negociations should fail, the money was to be destined for an expedition on the Black Sea, to throw the flames of war into the very heart of Constantinople. Potemkin declared that he himself would command this expedition. The ambition of the haughty Catharine was inflamed; the difficulties which she

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at first thought proper to start against the enormity of the demand vanished; and though her finances were exhausted, the sum was granted. Potemkin not only obtained these eight millions of roubles, but he also felt confident that his demands of much larger sums would be readily complied with, if necessary to execute his vast designs.

It was about this time that Radischeff, one of the superior officers of the customs at Petersburgh, published the narrative of a journey from Petersburgh toMoscow, in which he feigned to have had a dream. Truth in this dream had appeared to him, and ordered him to make strong representations to the Empress about the overbearing power of Potemkin; the conduct of both the sovereign and her minister were reprobated in the most severe terms. This was the first printed libel that ever appeared at Petersburgh. It was publicly sold for two days before it attracted the notice of government. The author was presently discovered. He declared, on his examination, that he did not conceive there could be any harm in publishing a dream; and that, if any one should see his resemblance in it, he was no more in fault than if he had held up a mirror for people to look in. The Empress was so incensed at this defence, that Radischeff was sent to Siberia. Count Alexander Worontzoff and Princess Dashkoff, his sister, the

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known patrons of the bold writer, were suspected of having instigated him to publish his dream. The former was even examined before the secret commission, and both lost much of their consideration at court.

CHAP. XIV.

Campaigns against the Turks in 1789 *and* 1790. *Ismaïl is taken; and Potemkin, after having placed his troops in winter-quarters, repairs to Yassy.*

THE spring had scarcely announced its genial influence, when the war raged again with all its horrors, even before the arrival of the commander-in-chief at the army. Towards the end of March, three or four thousand Turks appeared on the Pruth, and drove back to the distance of twenty or thirty miles some regiments of Cossacks that attempted to oppose their passage. This small corps was the advanced guard of a division of fifteen or sixteen thousand Turks, which soon after attacked the Russian out-posts; and this division was closely followed by the main Ottoman

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army under the command of the grand-visir. On receiving this information, Marshal Romanzoff, who commanded the army of the Ukraine, sent strong reinforcements to his out-posts, and set his troops in motion. On the 1st of April a brisk engagement took place between the advanced guards of the two armies: the affair however was not decisive.

But Count Romanzoff was not permitted to adorn his brow with the laurels of this campaign. Potemkin, who had long hated him, beheld his merit, and the estimation in which he was held by the army, with an envious eye. The talents and virtues of the Field-marshal were so generally acknowledged, that it would have been impossible not to give him an independent command. Unable to reduce the venerable veteran to receive his orders, Potemkin strove to counteract his plans, and, by repeated disappointments, to force him to retire from the service. He retained not only the greatest number, but the flower of the troops, for his own army. He kept the army of the Ukraine in want of the most necessary articles; and yet, having, as president of the council of war, the direction of all operations, he expected of the Marshal the performance of movements which required a much more numerous and better equipped army than that which he commanded. Not contented with this injustice, he paid in the

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army of Romanzoff several officers who controled his operations, and even made reports to the court against him. The complaints of the Marshal were not listened to. His detractors were openly supported, and rewards refused to those whom he pointed out as deserving of them for having distinguished themselves under his orders. Weary of such glaring injustice, the illustrious general, who by his victories had fixed the ascendancy which the Russians have ever since had over the Turks, relinquished the career in which he had covered himself with so much glory, and solicited his recall. Potemkin immediately applied for the command which Romanzoff resigned. He was appointed generalissimo of all the troops employed against the Turks. His army was called the Army of the South; and General Kamensky was entrusted with the command of the army of the Ukraine, which was only considered as a division of the main army.

The war was now likely to take a more murderous turn, and to be protracted. The grand-signior, Abdul Achmed IV. had just suddenly expired, and left the throne to his nephew, Selim III. a young prince of twenty-eight years of age, who was known to be of a warlike disposition, and extremely hostile to the Russians. It was therefore probable that the conferences, held at Yassy while the armies were engaged, would

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soon be broken up, since neither of the two parties seemed to wish for peace. The war continued with renovated activity: but the Turks were not successful. After having been forced in their intrenchments at Galatz by Lieutenant-general Defelden, and defeated in every engagement that took place during the months of May and June, they were at length, notwithstanding the rapidity of their retreat, overtaken, on the 21st of July, 1789, near Fokschaw, by Lieutenant-general Suwaroff, who gained over them a complete victory; in consequence of which, he took Fokschaw and a large quantity of ammunition and provisions. This capture was so much the more acceptable, because provisions were scarce in the Russian army; the country which was the theatre of war, could not provide for the subsistence of the troops, and the convoys from the interior did not arrive regularly.

Not contented with making his countrymen triumph, Suwaroff also became the protector and saviour of their almost useless allies. The Austrians displayed indeed so little activity during the whole war, that their generals must be supposed to have had secret orders for such a conduct. They suffered themselves to be surrounded near the river Rimniks by the army of the grand-visir, who thought it more safe to attack an indo-

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lent enemy than the enterprizing Russians. He had very artfully concealed his march. Prince Cobourg, who commanded the Austrians, was assailed by an army very superior in strength to his own, when he thought himself attacked only by equal numbers. In this extremity he solicited the assistance of Suwaroff, whose division was the nearest to his troops. Suwaroff with his eight thousand Russians hastened to the relief of the Austrians. They were flying before the Turks, who already fancied themselves in possession of victory: but the intrepid Russians fell upon the Ottomans with fixed bayonets. The Turks, astonished at the arrival of troops which they supposed at a great distance, and convinced, from the vigour and boldness of their attack, that they were followed by more considerable forces, began to give way, and were soon completely routed. Suwaroff eagerly pursued the flying foe. He killed six thousand Turks; the number of his prisoners was still more considerable. He also captured almost all their cannon, their baggage, and their standards; took possession of their camp, where he found an immense booty; and disabled them from keeping the field, or opposing the subsequent progress of the coalesced armies. This brilliant victory, gained near the river Rimniks,

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procured Suwaroff the surname of Rimnikski, and the double title of Count of the Holy Roman and Russian empire.

A spirit of emulation was raised among the Russian generals; they vied with each other. Such is the constant effect of the unity and energy with which military operations are stamped by a good commander. When the chiefs of the different corps of an army are kept in subordination, and have no prospect of obtaining the command-in-chief, they have no other ambition but that of rendering themselves conspicuous by their obedience and zeal, and of performing with distinguished ability the orders they receive. As Potemkin was not disposed to forego the smallest prerogative attached to a supreme command, no one felt inclined to dispute his pre-eminence, or to oppose his determinations. Every one was submissive and docile, and aspired only to be worthy of retaining the separate command with which he was entrusted.

While Suwaroff was routing the Turks wherever he came up with them, Repnin drove them before him with equal vigour. After having defeated the Seraskier Hassan Pacha, to whom he was opposed, in several engagements, he at last gained a complete victory over him on the 12th of September, 1789, and forced him to shut himself up in Ismaïl with the wreck of his corps.

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General Kamenski took Galatz on the Danube, the most important place in Moldavia next to Yassy. He consigned this beautiful and rich town to pillage, and then laid it in ashes: a conduct which Potemkin loudly condemned, as well as the cruelties practised by this general, whom he was at last obliged to deprive of his command on account of his barbarity. General Ribas made a still more important conquest; in sight of the Turkish fleet, he took the castle of Adehibei, which was provided with a numerous artillery and an immense quantity of gunpowder, which proved of eminent service to the Russian army. Colonel Platof, who had been detached from the corps of the Prince of Anhalt Bernburg, took a Pacha with three tails prisoner, with his whole force, consisting of above one thousand men.

While the different divisions of the army were thus driving the Turkish troops of Bessarabia and Moldavia to the southern parts of the latter province (the principal places of which were already surrounded and cut off from all succour), and pushing them towards the Danube, the last rampart of the Ottoman empire, Potemkin advanced with the main army in a formidable mass behind the lighter corps, which he had set in motion, and which had opened a passage for him. This army achieved the work which the detached

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corps had begun; it established itself on the ground over which they had marched, and took possession of it. Akerman, Belgnod, Palanka, and other towns, submitted successively to the arms of the Prince. The garrison of Akerman had attempted a resistance after having commenced a conference respecting its surrender. They thought of gaining time: but Potemkin was not to be caught unprepared: his means were ready. He caused the town to be attacked at the same time, and with equal ardour, by the land-army and the flotilla. By persisting in a fruitless defence, the Turks would have exposed themselves to a certain and total destruction: they therefore chose rather to capitulate.

Potemkin then advanced towards Bender. To avoid the effusion of blood, he wished to take this place rather by capitulation than by force. He therefore sent some of the Turks whom he had taken prisoners at Akerman into the town, to give their evidence of the humanity he displayed as conqueror when he was not irritated by a fruitless resistance. At the same time he threatened the inhabitants with the utmost rigour, if they should oblige him to conquer the town by force, after they had rejected his moderation. Nevertheless, he did not neglect his means of attack. He was sufficiently acquainted with mankind, to know that nothing gives more

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weight to conciliating proposals, than the apparatus of force. He ordered his troops to approach, closely to invest Bender on all sides. He sent fifty gun-boats up the Dniester, which advanced against the fort; and scarcely had the different corps taken the station assigned to them, when he ordered General Samoïloff to attack one of the eastern suburbs at the head of the Cossacks. This attack proved completely successful. The fort kept up a very hot fire, to dislodge the troops that had possessed themselves of the suburb: but it was in vain. The commandant then dispatched an Aga, who came to announce to the commander-in-chief of the Russians, that the inhabitants of Bender were ready to receive him, and to surrender: but no mention was made of the garrison in this message. Potemkin wrote to the commandant to induce him to surrender, promising to convey him, his troops, and his baggage, up the Danube, or any where else he might choose; and threatening, that, if on the contrary he should arrest his triumphant arms by a foolish obstinacy, he would put the whole garrison to the sword. As the answer of the commandant was not decisive, Potemkin declared that he would no longer listen to any proposal, and ordered the firing to be resumed in a manner more dreadful than ever. This severity inspired the inhabitants with alarm. They sent a fresh deputation

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to offer to capitulate; but they requested that the fortress should not be evacuated by the Turks before the end of twenty days, and that no Russian soldier should enter it before the expiration of that time. Potemkin returned no answer, but commanded the assault; the deputation had not re-entered the town when the Russians were already menacing the ramparts on all sides. This display of vigour, which would have been terrible in its effects, apprised the commandant of what he had to expect from so bold and enterprizing an enemy, who did not suffer himself to be trifled with. He instantly dispatched an officer to announce that the town and fortress were ready to surrender at discretion. Thus did this important garrison, through the firmness and energy of their commander, fall into the hands of the Russians without any loss of men on their side. They found in Bender three hundred pieces of heavy artillery, mostly of metal, five-and-twenty mortars, eight hundred weight of gunpowder, a prodigious quantity of cannon-balls, granates, and arms of all kinds, and an immense stock of flour and biscuits. The Turkish garrison was conveyed to the Danube.

Potemkin dispatched Valerian Zuboff, the youngest brother of the favourite, with this important news to Petersburgh. He treated this young officer with marked distinction; which is

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an evident proof that he was not guided by a blind hatred in his disapprobation of Plato Zuboff as a favourite, but really thought his influence prejudicial to the state. Valerian was uncommonly well received by the Empress. She presented him with the order of St. George, and appointed him adjutant-general, which gave him the rank of a major-general.

Towards the conqueror himself, Catharine displayed that generosity, of which she set the example among the monarchs of modern times. She sent him one hundred thousand roubles in gold; a crown of laurels made of emeralds set with superb diamonds, and valued at one hundred and fifty thousand roubles; and ordered three gold medals to be struck to his honour, each having the profile of the hero crowned on one side; and on the other the first had the map of the Crimæa, the second a plan of Oczakof, and the third the plan of Bender.

These different actions and conquests occupied the Russian troops till the spring of the year 1790. No battle of importance furnished them with an opportunity of increasing their glory by fresh victories. The Turks would no longer stand before them in the field. Cut off, dispersed, and reduced to small corps, their armies were no longer able to oppose the formidable mass which continued to advance upon them. Potemkin had

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approached Ismaïl without any obstacle. This place, situated near one of the mouths of the Danube, was of great importance; its conquest accomplished the reduction of Moldavia, and opened the door to fresh victories for the succeeding campaign. Potemkin wished to subdue Ismaïl before he placed his troops in winter-quarters. He sent Suwaroff to besiege it, and he himself covered the siege with his whole army at a short distance, ready to oppose any attempt of the Turks to succour the place. They did not, however, show the least inclination to molest the operations of Potemkin. Yet the garrison of Ismaïl, brave and well commanded, defended itself with obstinate courage notwithstanding the great number of troops by which it was besieged. The Russians had been seven months encamped under its walls, and still it did not appear disposed to surrender. Weary with the length of the siege, neither roused by the approach of danger, nor cheered with the prospect of victory, since the Turks continued steady in their inactivity, Potemkin relapsed into one of his fits of perfect apathy. Surrounded by courtiers and females, occupied with entertainments, games, and plays, more than with warlike projects, he lived in his camp like one of the Satraps of old, and set a disgraceful example to his soldiers.

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He, who aspired to overthrow an empire, suffered himself to be subdued by luxury. Fortunately, he was opposed to enemies addicted to sloth and indolence, slaves to effiminacy, and whom repeated defeats had robbed of the last sparks of energy. Had they attempted to rouse their proud adversary, he would, no doubt, have shewn them that his repose was that of the lion. It was however reserved to one of the females, who devoted themselves to the task of amusing and entertaining the weary hero, to snatch him from the lethargy in which he was plunged.

Under the pretence of telling him his fortune by means of a pack of cards, Madame de Witte foretold him that he would take Ismaïl within three weeks. At these words, reflecting on his own conduct, and sensible that he might justly be reproached with having besieged that town for seven months without making any impression upon it, Potemkin answered, smiling, "that he "had a method of divination far more infallible:" and instantly he sent orders to Suwaroff, to take Ismaïl within three days. Suwaroff, glad of an order which he appeared to have waited for with impatience, obeyed with alacrity. He assembled his troops, told them in a few words what was expected of them, and declared that they must not only obey, but succeed. Experience had

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taught him that slaughter is unfortunately an incitement for the Russian soldier, and a spur to his exertions. He ended his speech by the words: "No quarter!" and immediately commenced the assault. The Russians were twice repulsed: but, the third time, they scaled the ramparts, penetrated into the town, and put every person they met to the sword. They had lost fifteen thousand men in the ditches of Ismaïl; they avenged their loss in the slaughter of thirty-five thousand Turks. Suwaroff wrote to the Empress: "The haughty Ismaïl is at your feet."

Thus ended the campaign of 1790. Potemkin assigned winter-quarters to his troops and repaired to Yassy, where negociations for peace had been carried on all the summer. Potemkin appeared at the congress with a marked superiority. He had just obtained the most important successes, placed himself in a formidable attitude for the next campaign, conquered all the strong holds which covered Constantinople towards the north, taken the magazines of the Turks, dispersed or destroyed their armies, and was master of the sea. The conquest of Ismaïl afforded him the means of intercepting the succour which the Turkish armies on the Danube might expect from the Black Sea by the mouth of that river. His troops, victorious, inured to war, and full of enthusiasm,

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lived in their enemies' country, and recruited their strength at the expence of their adversaries, while they were waiting for the return of the fine season to beat them anew.

CHAP. XV.

Though the Empress is desirous of peace with the Turks, Potemkin opposes it, and returns to Petersburgh, where he is splendidly received.

The step which Potemkin had taken, appeared to betray the wish of crowning his exploits by a glorious peace. All Europe supposed that such was his intention, when the news arrived, that, after the taking of Ismaïl, he had repaired to the congress of Yassy. But he was very far from thinking of peace. The advantages which the next campaign held out, seemed too considerable to be neglected. His object at Yassy was to start pretensions so bold that they must be judged inadmissible, and thus to render any reconciliation impossible.

But if the minister felt a great reluctance for peace, his rivals, whose influence and authority

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were also considerable, were ardently desirous of it. Catharine herself, after having wished for war with that impatience which never doubts of success and never weighs the means, was now as fervently sighing for peace; the results of the war, in her opinion, had not been sufficiently prompt, nor sufficiently decisive. Her finances were exhausted. The conquests gained over the enemy, the wealth of which he had been robbed, could not help to replenish her exchequer. The financial prosperity of a state rests merely on a wise administration, and its internal resources arising from agriculture and commerce; not upon capitals obtained by the force of arms in foreign countries. Such capitals are more rapidly consumed and dilapidated, than acquired. The Empress was particularly disgusted and humiliated by the continual loans to which she was forced to resort, and by the difficulties which she found in filling them, owing to the little credit which her financial administration inspired. Holland required the guarantee of a private banker at Petersburgh. Another power demanded the joint signature of the heir of her throne. Catharine agreed to the former, but she never would submit to the last condition. The English consul, more generous, offered her an advance of three millions in the name of the English merchants settled at Petersburgh: but this sum was

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far from being adequate to the enormous wants of the state.

Potemkin, too much occupied with the war to think of the internal administration of the empire, was not conscious of the embarrassments which Catharine experienced in her finances. His part was confined to demanding and receiving, without caring how she procured the means of complying with his demands. He enjoyed all the sweets of the war, success and glory rewarded his fatigues; while Catharine tasted all its bitterness. Is it to be wondered at, that, under such circumstances, the opinion of Catharine was altered, and that of the warrior remained unchanged?

Independent of this source of contradiction which he had to encounter, Potemkin had to struggle against the favourite Zuboff, by whom he was detested, and who, aspiring to render himself necessary, and to usurp the power which the Prince enjoyed, had a pressing interest in causing a system altogether different from that of Potemkin to predominate, and in putting an end to a war, which covered his rival with glory, and rendered him the admiration of the empire. Zuboff therefore eagerly seconded the anxiety of Catharine for peace. Instead of alleviating the cares which the war caused her, he strove to embitter them. The correspondence of Catharine with Potemkin partook of the state of her

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heart. She shewed some ill-humour, and the fiery Potemkin irritated her by his peremptory answers, and his obstinate perseverance in refusing to conduct the negociations with a view to obtain peace.

These epistolary discussions became so warm, that Potemkin thought his presence at Petersburgh necessary to bring Catharine over to his opinion. But his excessive confidence in himself deceived him with regard to the ascendancy which he still expected to have, whenever he should employ all his means. As soon as he mentioned his intention to return, the artful Catharine evinced the utmost anxiety to see him. She ordered every thing to be prepared to receive him with splendour; but in the mean time, she secretly conveyed to Prince Repnin, who was entrusted with the command of the army of the South during the absence of Potemkin, full powers to sign the preliminaries of peace, whenever he should think the opportunity favourable.

Potemkin was going to re-appear at Petersburgh and before his sovereign with so many titles to glory, that it was not possible to shew him the least dissatisfaction. Catharine seemed to forget her displeasure, to remember only the exploits and services of the Prince. It was the interest of her glory publicly to support and to applaud the man of her choice, as it became her

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gratitude to honour the fortunate warrior, whose successes had extended the limits of her empire. Nothing was neglected to give to the return of the hero the appearance of a triumph. Numbers of labourers were employed night and day to repair the road from Moscow to Petersburgh, to render his journey more easy and expeditious. The approach to the capital was illuminated at the distance of several miles; and as the day of his arrival was uncertain, this illumination was repeated every night for more than a week. Every day messengers were dispatched by the Empress with orders to continue their route until they met him, and speedily to return with news of the Prince; in short, none of the most flattering marks of attention that a sovereign can bestow upon a subject, were omitted, to convince Potemkin of the estimation in which the Empress held him, and how much she wished that this estimation should be shared by the public.

When she knew that he was arrived at Moscow, she determined to send him a solemn deputation. Count Besborodko ardently solicited to be one of the deputies, and was accordingly appointed a member of the deputation. This eagerness appeared extraordinary at court; it excited the suspicion of the Zubofs. They could not witness, without uneasiness, a circumstance which brought together two men of equal ago-

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city and ambition: both necessary to their sovereign by their talents, though of a different cast; both of unbounded influence over her mind; the one possessed of great firmness, and the other of much pliancy and perseverance. By combining their talents and their means, they might domineer over the court, and annihilate any party that dared to struggle against them. It was actually with these views that Besborodko, dissatisfied with Zubof, thought of reconciling himself with Potemkin; and the latter, who had been long absent from court, and uninformed of its intrigues, received with pleasure a man who could give him essential information, and acquaint him with particulars which it was of importance for him to know. He learned every minute circumstance from Besborodko; and when he appeared before his sovereign, he was well prepared and intimately acquainted beforehand with whatever might be of service to his views, and cause them to be adopted.

Prince Potemkin made his entry at Petersburgh on the 11th of March, 1791. The Empress gave him the most gracious and most flattering reception. She even received him with such eagerness, that expert courtiers thought they perceived some affectation in her manner and expressions. At least, they were not free from constraint. The long absence of Potemkin had

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produced the usual effects of absence. Men rarely stand this ordeal, women never. With regard to constant and intimate society, Potemkin was become a stranger to Catharine; he had left to others time to gain that particular confidence which arises from the want of relieving the heart and the necessity of disburthening it to the object nearest at hand. Besides, the Empress and her minister now differed in their views upon the very subject on which they were most agreed when they last separated. Catharine felt the necessity of accounting in some degree for her change of opinion; and that the secret would be wrung from her by art, if not obtained almost by force. She apparently wished to keep that moment off by public demonstrations, which were to intoxicate Potemkin, to leave him leisure to think of his glory and triumphs, but none to meddle with politics and the affairs of the state.

Potemkin was perfectly aware of what was passing in the heart of his sovereign. He perceived the decrease of his influence over her mind; but he did not suppose his ascendancy irrecoverably lost, and fancied he might regain in time what he had been robbed of by his absence, and the efforts of his rivals. Keeping his observations and his designs within his own breast, he strenuously applied to conceal from the eyes of

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the courtiers the momentary change of his situation: and his dissimulation was completely successful, because Catharine outwardly continued to treat him with the greatest consideration and friendship, and scarcely dared to own to herself that she wished to withdraw from the authority of him whose almost absolute sway she had so long recognized.

The better to convince the public that he had not ceased to be the imperious favourite, actually invested with as much power as the sovereign, and incapable of bending his pride to the apparent acknowledgment of any superior authority, Potemkin assumed towards the courtiers a firmer tone and manners more haughty and despotic than ever. His behaviour overawed not only the court, but perhaps even Catharine herself. He who is seen to be afraid of nothing, is sometimes feared. Potemkin conducted himself with particular arrogance towards Zubof: he neglected even to treat him with common decency; and when the favourite, who was frequently dispatched to Potemkin by the Empress, was obliged to converse with him about state-affairs, Potemkin treated him with a disdain and flippancy of manners bordering on open contempt. To this haughtiness of demeanour he added another artifice, (if that may be placed to the account of policy, which agreed so well with his temper and

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disposition:) he abandoned himself to pleasure and dissipation with such violence, that he appeared to think of nothing else. He continually gave sumptuous repasts and splendid entertainments. Dressed in rich clothes; displaying in his furniture, in his equipages, in his liveries, all the luxury of the East; surrounded with a court as numerous as that of the sovereign, particularly with a crowd of handsome females, who exhausted all their resources to please him; Potemkin, in his intoxication, seemed to find no enjoyment but in voluptuousness, and lived as if unmindful of his glory, his country, and his ambition.

The desire of attracting the eyes of all; the wish of appearing powerful, secure, and happy; an innate passion for pleasure; the want of varying it, to render it interesting; and the strength of his constitution, which was not satisfied with a moderate enjoyment; all contributed to betray Potemkin into excesses equally fatal to his mental and physical powers, which sometimes caused his understanding to suffer from the disordered state of his health. His constitution experienced, all at once, a weakness indicative of a powerfully active principle of destruction, which encroached upon his years. The bad state of his health gave him an irresolution little consonant with a mind destined to be high and great, and to be agitated by none but noble passions. He was weary of every

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thing; the slightest objection exasperated, while, by a singular contrast, the utmost complacency disgusted him. Though absolute and despotic in excess, no one felt a greater contempt for slaves. From having abused life, Potemkin had no longer vivacity enough to answer the demands of imagination, of that faculty which subsists after all the others, and increases with their decay. He offered the painful spectacle of an habitual state of contradictions, which, as they degraded him, justified the wish of Catharine to shake off the yoke of his ascendancy, and perhaps deprived him of the power of executing the design which he harboured, to resume all his former influence.

While his thoughts were engrossed with pleasure, he resolved to give the Empress, in his Taurian palace, an entertainment which should exceed any thing of the kind, and bear a splendid testimony to the fecundity of his genius, to his taste, and to his wealth. But to understand the details of the uncommon tribute of gratitude which Potemkin paid to his sovereign, it is necessary to be more minutely acquainted with the theatre where it was offered.

The Taurian palace consists only of one story and two wings; but in its length it occupies a vast space of ground. In the front is an immense colonnade, covered by a grand cupola. The entrance is through a large hall, with rooms

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on the right and left; at the bottom of which is a portico, which leads to a second hall of a prodigious size, lighted from the top; and with a lofty gallery intended for the orchestra, and provided with a grand organ. Thence a double row of columns leads to the principal saloon. To describe the impression which the sight of this gigantic temple produces, is impossible. Its length exceeds one hundred paces, its width is in proportion; and the roof is supported by a double row of colossal pillars. At about half the height, between these pillars, are boxes ornamented with festoons, elegantly stuccoed and lined with silk. From the roof are suspended large crystal globes, serving as lustres, the light of which is reflected by mirrors of uncommon size in every part of this spacious room. The saloon has neither ornaments nor furniture; but at the two extremities, each of which forms a semicircle, are vases of Carrara marble, of extraordinary size and beautiful workmanship. Near this saloon, and divided from it by a simple colonnade, is the winter-garden. The vault of this enormous building is supported by pillars resembling palm-trees. Numerous flues in the walls and columns, and leaden pipes with hot water under ground, keep up a pleasing warmth. Flowery shrubs and exotic plants delight the eye on all sides; it occasionally rests with admiration

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upon the number of fine antique statues with which this delicious spot is adorned. A transparent obelisk of glass, and a large mirror in the door, reflect, in a thousand different shades, these wonders of art and nature. The genial warmth, the delicious odour of the plants, and the voluptuous silence that reigns in this enchanting place, lull the soul into a secret reverie, and transport the imagination to the groves of Italy. But the illusion vanishes at the sight of the horrors of winter, when the eye glances through the windows at the snow and ice with which the pavilion is surrounded nearly half of the year. In the centre of this Elyseum stands majestically, on an elevated pedestal, a statue of Catharine II. of Parian marble.

It was on this splendid theatre that Potemkin intended to entertain his sovereign. Like every plan of his gigantic fancy, it was to be on a colossal scale. A whole month was consumed in preparations. Artists of all kinds were employed, whole warehouses emptied. Several hundred persons attended daily to rehearse the respective parts they were to perform, and each rehearsal was a kind of entertainment.

At length the day, so impatiently wished for by the inhabitants of the metropolis, arrived. Besides the Empress and the imperial family, Potemkin had invited the whole court, the

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foreign ministers, the nobility, and a great number of private persons of the first classes of the community.

The company began to assemble in masquerade dresses at six in the evening. When the carriage of the Empress approached, meat, liquor, and clothes, were profusely distributed to the mob assembled at the outer doors. The Prince handed the Empress from her coach. He was dressed in a scarlet coat, over which hung a long cloak of gold lace, ornamented with precious stones. He wore as many diamonds as a man can wear in his dress. His hat, in particular, was so loaded with them, that he was obliged to have it carried by one of his aides-de-camp.

On her Majesty's entering the hall of the palace, a beautiful symphony, performed by more than three hundred musicians, resounded from the lofty gallery to greet her appearance. Thence she proceeded to the principal saloon, attended by a brilliant concourse. Here she took her seat upon a kind of throne surrounded with transparencies decorated with appropriate mottos and inscriptions. The company dispersed, some walking under the colonnades, while others got up into the boxes: and now commenced the second act of this extraordinary spectacle.

The Grand-dukes, Alexander and Constantine, at the head of the most beautiful young persons

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of the court, danced a ballet. The dancers were forty-eight in number, all dressed uniformly in white, and wearing scarfs and girdles set with diamonds worth above ten millions of roubles. The music was taken from known songs analogous to the festivity; and the dance was intermixed with singing. The famous ballet-master, Le Picq, concluded the performance with a pas seul of his own composition.

The company now passed into another saloon hung with the richest tapestry of the Gobelins; in the centre of which stood an artificial elephant, covered with emeralds and rubies. A richly dressed Persian acted as his guide. On a signal he gave by striking upon a bell, a curtain flew up, and exposed to view a magnificent theatre, where two ballets of a novel kind, and a humorous comedy, were performed; with which the spectators appeared peculiarly delighted. After this spectacle, several chorusses were sung; country-dances succeeded; and these were followed by a grand Asiatic procession, remarkable for the great diversity of the national dresses of the different nations subjected to the sceptre of the Empress.

Soon after, every room of the palace, brilliantly lighted up for the occasion, was thrown open to the amazed crowd. The whole palace seemed in a blaze; the garden was covered with sparkling

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stones. Numerous mirrors, crystal pyramids and globes reflected this magnificent spectacle in every direction. All the windows of the winter-garden, which serve also for so many doors to pass into the summer-garden, were hidden by shrubs and fruit-bearing trees, which appeared on fire; and while the eye contemplated this brilliant scene with a delicious rapture, the exquisite perfume of a variety of perfuming-pans, concealed behind flowers of all sorts, led the enchanted spectators to believe that it actually proceeded from their illuminated branches which dazzled their sight.

When supper was announced, six hundred persons sat down to table. Potemkin stood behind the chair of the Empress, to wait upon her Majesty; and he did not sit down before she repeatedly ordered him to be seated. Those of the company who could not find room at the table, were entertained at the side-boards. The plate was all gold and silver. The most exquisite dishes were served up in rich vases; the most delicious wines flowed in abundance from antique cups; and the table was lighted by the most costly lustres of crystal. An astonishing number of footmen and domestics, in superb dresses, were eager to anticipate the wishes of the guests. Nothing, in short, that luxury could name, was asked for in vain.

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Contrary to her general rule, the Empress stayed till one o'clock in the morning. She seemed afraid of disturbing the pleasure of her host. When she retired, numerous voices, accompanied by the most harmonious instruments, chanted a beautiful hymn to her praise. She was so affected, that she turned round to Potemkin to express her satisfaction. The latter, overpowered by the strong feeling of what he owed to her Majesty, fell on his knee, and, seizing her hand, bedewed it with tears. It was the last time he should ever, on that spot, stammer out his respect and gratitude to his bountiful sovereign.

CHAP. XVI.

Prince Repnin opens the campaign of 1791, by a victory, and signs preliminaries of peace at Yassy; whither Potemkin hastens, though sick; and where he dies.

While Potemkin was devoting his hours to pleasure, and enlivening the capital with the splendour of his banquets, war recommenced in the south of the empire under the banners of an

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old warrior, who, a stranger to idleness and luxury, gathered the laurels which Potemkin now seemed to disdain. Prince Repnin, who commanded the army of the South during the absence of Potemkin, opened the campaign of 1791 with some brilliant operations. He sent General Goudovitch, who commanded a Russian division on the frontiers of the Kuban, to attack a corps of thirty thousand Turks which had there been collected under the orders of the Seraskier Batal-Bey. Although inferior in numbers, the Russians defeated the Turks; took their camp, which they found amply provided with every thing; and made the General and half of his troops prisoners. Batal-Bey was suspected of treachery. The great superiority, in point of numbers, of the corps which he commanded, and the extreme eagerness which he evinced to go to Petersburgh, give some colour of probability to these suspicions.

After this battle, the Turks proposed an armistice, which was refused. War was continued with much vivacity and with great success on the part of the Russians, who every where kept up their superiority. Skirmishes and engagements of whole divisions turned alike to their advantage. They no longer counted the number of Turks they were attacking, so certain did they appear that victory would remain faithful to their arms.

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The Russian soldier found a particular incitement in the rich booty which he took everywhere from the enemy; and it is perhaps because one party had every thing to lose, and the other every thing to gain, that success constantly attended the last.

General Kutuzof crossed the Danube, penetrated into Bulgaria, and attacked and defeated near Babada a corps of fifteen thousand Turks intrenched in their camp. He took the camp, and the town, which he reduced to ashes. This was a heavy loss to the Turks, because it contained considerable magazines. The light troops of the Russians pursued the remains of the Ottoman army to a great distance, and took a considerable number of prisoners; among whom was the prophet Elijah Mansur. Through his predictions of the success of their arms, he had acquired great fame among his countrymen. His oracles had such an influence over their minds, that they gave the devout Mussulmans more confidence and presumption than they derived from the valour and number of their warriors. But Elijah himself fell a victim to the security which he had inspired; he was led away a captive by the enemy.

The successes which the Russians had hitherto gained, had only been obtained over the advanced corps of the Turks. Their grand army was

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assembling under the walls of Matzin in Bulgaria, and already formidable from its numbers. The grand-visir Yuzuf, by whom it was to be commanded, was arrived. The army was ready to move forwards, and its general seemed more inclined to advance towards the Russians than to wait for their approach. Prince Repnin saw the necessity of being before-hand with him. He congratulated himself that on this occasion the opportunity of acquiring glory was intimately connected with the safety of the state. Strong in the confidence of the Empress, of which he had a proof in his pocket, he lost no time in consulting Potemkin. Relying on his own experience and on the valour of his troops, he began his march, suddenly passed the Danube, surprised the grand-visir, who did not expect so much diligence, and attacked without hesitation an army of above one hundred thousand men under arms, though he scarcely counted forty thousand under his command. The battle lasted a long time, and was obstinately fought; victory long remained undecided. The Turks defended themselves with a courage and obstinacy which ought to to have made them invincible, but which, by exhausting their strength, rendered their defeat more complete. The Russians made a horrible slaughter of them. The quantity of provisions and riches they found in a camp but recently

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established, to which the most illustrious individuals of the Ottoman empire had flocked in crowds, was incredible. On seeing his last effort blasted in so cruel a manner, the grand-visir lost all hope of ever vanquishing the Russians; and only thought of concluding a peace on the least disadvantageous terms. He sent to the Russian general proposals to which the latter listened with so much the more pleasure, as he knew that, by putting an end to the war, he was acting up to the intentions of his sovereign. Far from placing any difficulties and obstructions in the way of peace, Prince Repnin, to the great surprise of the Turks, facilitated its conclusion to the utmost of his power. The Dniester was considered as the natural boundary of the two empires: and, to settle these limits for ever in the most incontestable manner, the Turks consented to abandon all their possessions between that river and the Bog. On these conditions, preliminaries were signed, and Prince Repnin had the glory of accomplishing this important business, the conclusion of which he had brought about by a single victory.

Potemkin, in the mean time, obstinately continued at Petersburgh. The month of July had commenced. Three precious months of a campaign, which was to be decisive, were already elapsed; and he who was the author of the war, and who had so great an interest in its success,

appeared sunk in a slothful repose. But it was not sloth that detained this impatient and haughty man: he had a stronger motive for prolonging his residence in the metropolis. The Empress was resolved to make peace; her minister obstinately insisted upon the war being continued. A thousand reasons determined him not to recede from his opinion: but perhaps the most urgent for him was his being aware that Catharine's anxiety for peace was prompted by Zubof. The vanity of Potemkin was terribly hurt at not being able to get the better of the favourite, whom he detested, and whom he thought unworthy of struggling with him on any occasion. He firmly resisted the pressing solicitations of Catharine to repair to the army and to achieve peace by his victories. He resolved not to quit Petersburgh, unless the Empress promised to leave him sole judge in that cause, and at liberty to protract the war as long as he should think fit. These opposite determinations of the sovereign and her minister occasioned warm altercations between them. The Empress did not conceal her vexation, but could not resolve to command. Potemkin braved the anger of his sovereign, and was positively determined not to obey.

To avoid the inconvenience of a direct disobedience which she foresaw, Catharine attempted to entrust several grandees with the commission of

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transmitting to Potemkin her command to set out for the army: but they all declined undertaking the dangerous task. The embarrassment of the Empress was at its height, when the victories of Repnin most opportunely came to her relief. At this news, the eagerness of Potemkin to fly to the army was as great as his former reluctance. He was not yet acquainted with the consequences of the successes of Repnin; the Empress took particular care not to inform him of the confidential powers she had given to the old general. Had he been acquainted with this circumstance, his wrath would still more have hastened his departure, and he would have performed the journey with the rapidity of lightning.

But his health, which was in an alarming state, would hardly permit him to indulge in the impetuosity of his temper, as it was sure to suffer from any fresh agitation of his mind. Notwithstanding the precautions taken to make travelling easy to him, and although the motion of his carriage was extremely gentle, it yet incommoded him. From the very first day after his departure, he felt his already weakened frame decay still faster. At a considerable distance from Petersburgh, he met with a messenger from the army, of whom he learned that preliminaries of peace had been signed by Repnin. This appeared to reanimate him: but this glimpse of

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reviving vigour was but the consequence of the rage into which he was thrown by this news, and he felt so much the weaker for it afterwards.

On his arrival at Yassy, Potemkin's first care was to send for Repnin, and to overwhelm him with the bitterest reproaches for having dared to fight and to conclude a peace without consulting him. Confiding in the support of the Empress, Repnin for the first time dared to brave the anger of Potemkin, and was perhaps the first Russian who had that temerity. He answered, that he had done nothing but his duty, and owed no account of his conduct to any but his sovereign. Potemkin nevertheless prepared to overturn his work: but Heaven left him no time for the execution of this design.

Every day, every hour, his illness grew worse, and death drew nearer. Exertion, fatigue, the fire of his imagination, the vivacity of his passions, and the excesses of all kinds to which he had so long given himself up, had worn him out. Potemkin felt life ebbing without having any apparent malady. Instead of attempting his cure by adopting a diet suitable to his indisposition, he grew impatient at his sufferings, and pretended to overcome them by the strength of his constitution. He dismissed his physicians, lived upon salt meat and raw turnips, and drank hot wines and spirituous liquors. His disease soon grew

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worse, his blood was inflamed, his situation desperate. News was sent to Petersburgh that Potemkin could not live: Catharine heard it with much unconcern. The firmness of her mind was complimented, while her stoicism ought to have been placed to the account of her incredulity. She could not suppose that she was so soon to lose the hero of her reign. When the catastrophe happened she plainly shewed the estimation in which she held the life of a subject so illustrious and so necessary to her own glory.

Potemkin, in the mean time, struggled to avail himself of a remnant of life. His inability to attend with assiduity to the important affairs which occupied his mind, caused his greatest torment. At length his situation, grown worse from day to day, became altogether insupportable. His residence at Yassy appeared in every respect fatal to his health. He determined to quit that place, and to remove to Oczakof; perhaps with a view to expire on the theatre of his glory. He set out on the 15th of October, 1791, at three o'clock in the morning. Scarcely had he travelled a few versts, when he could no longer bear the motion of his carriage. He alighted. A carpet was spread at the foot of a tree: on this he was placed. He had no longer strength to utter a word; he could only press the hand of his favourite niece, Countess Branicky, who was with him; and he expired in her arms.

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Thus perished, on the high road, the man whose fame in his life-time had resounded all over Europe; the most magnificent prince of his age; more powerful than many kings; the founder of a great number of towns and palaces; who had increased by a third the real value of the territory of the empire in which he was born, and elevated the glory of his country to a point which dazzled other nations. He had but just completed the fifty-second year of his age.

The news of Potemkin's death had a truly dreadful effect upon Catharine: she swooned several times, was forced to be bled, and the symptoms of her grief partook in some degree of terror. Potemkin was the main pillar of her power, and the greatest ornament of her throne. The Empress knew this; she knew that she lost in him a devoted friend, who had caused her to be respected and feared, and who had rendered himself too formidable for any one ever to attempt to resist his ascendancy. By the death of Potemkin, Catharine was left without a guardian over her interests. She manifested ever after the weakness and irresolution of a female bereft of her support.

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CHAP. XVII.

The character of Potemkin.

Potemkin took so little care to conceal his vices, and every thing about him was stamped with such striking features, that, in his life-time, and during the first years after his death, his faults only were spoken of, and his good qualities never mentioned. He will not thus be judged by posterity.

Nature had endowed Potemkin with every gift that can render an individual conspicuous and interesting. His regular and strongly marked features; his noble countenance, in which dignity was mingled with sweetness; his colossal but finely proportioned figure, all these announced the strength, vigour, and courage. His mind belied nothing of what his handsome exterior promised. Potemkin possessed much feeling; not that soft sensibility which leads to pity, but that proud feeling which excites to enthusiasm, and inspires the passion for glory. He loved but one female in the course of his life; and that female was the greatest woman of her time. He loved her not like a slave, but like an independent lover, who delights in raising, embellishing, and

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holding up to admiration, the object of his affections; his passion for her was always blended with the love of his country. This last sentiment was Potemkin's predominant virtue. It is the noblest, and at the same time the source of a thousand virtues. This celebrated statesman never lost sight either of the glory of the Russian name, or of the design of rendering Russia the first power in Europe, both in reality and in public opinion. Such was the object of his negociations, of his conquests, of the towns he founded, of his different regulations, and even of his assumed haughtiness, his luxury, and his enormous expences: and such an object atones for many faults; it extenuates many vices, particularly when it is pursued with a perseverance that, in the end, is crowned with success.

If we view him as a statesman, we behold him constantly endeavouring to insure the preponderance of Russia by preventing or removing whatever was likely to outweigh that preponderance, or snatch it from her. He always directed his system of conquests towards the point where Russia was pretty nearly sure of victory, and encountered neither rivals nor copartitioning friends. It is well known that he never would have consented to the partition of Poland, the annihilation of which as a kingdom aggrandized the neighbours of Russia with the parts which

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they seized, and diminished her own power by these very parts over which she formerly exercised a sovereign influence. This partition was effected by men who were far from possessing the genius of Potemkin: but it is very extraordinary, that Catharine should have been brought to consent to this impolitic measure. There can be no better proof that, by losing her great statesman, she lost her tutelary genius; and if, after the death of this minister, the reign which he had rendered so glorious, has been fertile in nothing but errors, there is no injustice in ascribing to him the greater part of the wonders which illustrated that reign during his life.

Potemkin knew that he could not achieve any conquests of importance but with numerous and well-disciplined troops; and that he could not have a respectable army, unless he furnished the state with the means to maintain it. This object he accomplished in the principal war which he undertook, and which on that account he had so much at heart. The provinces he added to the empire were to be an inexhaustible source of wealth to Russia; while, at the same time, they determined her natural impregnable boundaries, which rendered these acquisitions doubly useful. Moreover, the conquest of these provinces formed his troops, inured them to war, to its fatigues and dangers; and by adding science and expe-

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rience to their personal bravery, and to all the other warlike qualities which they possessed, made them the best troops in the world.

Potemkin was constantly occupied with whatever tended to increase the agricultural and commercial wealth and the internal prosperity of the empire in general. It was with this view that he made so many efforts to achieve the conquest of the Crimæa and Kuban. It was with this view that he applied the means of which he could dispose, to rebuild the towns of those countries, to form harbours, to make canals and improvements of all kinds, and to attract from all parts a number of families who were to give life to these new colonies. It was, in fine, with this view that he wanted to enlarge the territory of the Russian empire by the whole extent of the shores of the Black-Sea. He knew perfectly well that it was only in this quarter that Russia could look for a real increase of power and wealth. He knew, that, to cause her commerce and agriculture to flourish, and to augment her population, she ought to look that way, not towards the North, and still less towards Poland. There is no doubt, in our opinion, that if he had been forced to choose, he would rather have yielded Petersburgh to Sweden, than restored the Crimæa to the Turks, and with regard to the true prosperity of the empire, his choice would undoubtedly have been the best.

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To judge whether the plans of a statesman have been great and his ambition well founded, we ought to look to futurity; and in this respect we think the designs and operations of Potemkin entitled to undisputed applause. If his impatience to enjoy and his despotic manners caused great abuses in the execution of his projects and even delayed the growth of the seeds which he sowed, it is nevertheless true that these seeds must at some future time produce fruits eminently useful to the country in which they were sown. It is by those remote consequences, and not merely by the immediate results, that a man who labours for future generations is to be judged.

In a military point of view, it cannot be denied that he discharged the office of President of the Council of War with ability, and improved the internal organization, the formation, the discipline, the appearance, the arms, and the manœuvres of the Russian army. He raised the genius of the Russians by exalting their unconquerable courage, and teaching them to fight with that boldness and vigour which suit them, and which, however, they had never before displayed, because no one (Munich perhaps excepted) had been completely aware of this feature in the Russian character. Suwaroff, whom Potemkin highly valued and constantly patronized, inhe-

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rited his principles in this respect, and became invincible.

The Russian army was considerably increased under Potemkin. He submitted to the empire a nursery of soldiers, who till then had been nominally its subjects, but of very little service. The Cossacks had formed a volunteer militia governed by republican laws, which no one before him dared to attempt to alter, and which Potemkin abrogated. He formed the Cossacks into regiments, and subjected them to the same recruiting laws and discipline as the other troops. He afterwards employed them in their true character, at the outposts, but regulated their service according to the principles and tactics proper for this kind of warfare, to which they never had attended before. He shewed, by the effect which these changes produced in the Cossacks, of what utility they might be to the Russian army. Potemkin esteemed them much, and was beloved by them. They almost adored Suwaroff; who, equally fond of them, taught them to serve with the greatest distinction. Having been but recently organized, the Cossacks are not yet what they may become. If the Russian government continues its attention to the improvement of these troops, it may convert the brave, intelligent, faithful, numerous, indefatigable, and warlike Cossacks

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into the principal instrument of its successes and the terror of its enemies.

Potemkin, who never did any thing but on a grand and even exaggerated scale, had formed in the army a corps of choice troops consisting of forty thousand grenadiers and as many *chasseurs*. These troops were not incorporated with regiments, but served as separate corps; which is, after all, the best way to employ choice troops. The Russian cavalry, before Potemkin's regulations, was nearly insignificant. Hussars were not known in the Russian army: but through his exertions, both the heavy and light cavalry were brought to a par with the best European troops of that kind. He also introduced companies of flying artillery; that excellent invention of Frederick the Great. In short, whether it were that circumstances favoured him, or that his genius, peculiarly adapted to that of his nation, proved the exact instrument of their improvement; it is certain that, at his death, that is to say, at a time when the Prussian army was already degenerated and that of France neglected, the Russian troops were the first in Europe. They scarcely deserved the fourth rank when Catharine ascended the throne.

The storming of Oczakof was the most brilliant exploit of Potemkin. He never gained any pitched battle. His claims to the title of a

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great general may perhaps be denied on that account. But it is certain that he had studied the system of modern warfare as a man of genius; the dispositions of his campaigns were as just as profound. He understood the great art of combining the march and direction of his columns, so as to render himself suddenly master of a country, surround the enemy, cut off his communications, capture his magazines, reduce him to a complete inactivity, and force him to own himself vanquished, even without having fought a battle. His operations were well connected; every general was successful, every one arrived at the point to which he was directed; war, in short, was conducted in that light and easy manner, which proves that he who directs it is perfect master of his plans, and that his means of execution are in his hands. The wars of Potemkin have cost Russia many lives; and yet he was not fond of shedding blood: this is proved by his conquest of the Crimæa and the taking of Bender. He was sparing of blood when it could be spared. The dreadful storming of Oczakof was perhaps necessary to strike the enemy with terror; it certainly had that effect.

His power in Russia was nearly equal to that of the sovereign. For the space of sixteen years Catharine had no designs but what were his, and did nothing but through him. It was in this

power that he found means to perform great things, and to execute the vast projects which he had formed. The different dignities with which he was invested, gave him the supreme management of every branch of the public administration; and he derived from these offices an immense income, which, added to the rents of his estates, enabled him to squander incredible riches; which he did, though more for the public good than for his own personal enjoyments. His talents were not inferior to the different functions which he had to discharge. What a fertile genius must he be possessed of, who combines with equal facility a diplomatic treaty, a campaign, a new military or financial organization, and an entertainment! The details of that which he gave in his Taurian palace, and the arrangements he contrived for the journey of the Empress to the Crimea (arrangements which were all his own, and had not been suggested by any one), evidently prove that his understanding possessed as much taste and elegance as strength and profundity. Had Potemkin been the sovereign of his country, he would have been idolized. He would not have been under the necessity of humiliating any one, nor would he have made an enemy. He possessed, in a superior degree, the virtues and the good qualities of the Russians: but he had also their faults, which,

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however, could not be offensive to his countrymen.

Potemkin's great qualities were obscured by many vices, which we have not disguised. He has particularly been reproached with haughtiness, inconstancy, and intemperance. But when we consider his extraordinary situation, and that his fortune depended on the caprices of a woman, it must in some degree be acknowledged that he could have maintained himself and preserved his power only by the fear which an imperious and unconquerable disposition was calculated to inspire. If his intrigues at court made him sometimes forget important affairs, it was unfortunate for Russia that Potemkin was forced to meddle with intrigues. But this neglect cannot be branded with the name of inconstancy and levity. He never was inconstant in the great political and military projects which he devised for the glory and the interest of Russia, nor in those which concerned his own elevation. His character never varied. Vigour and boldness were always its principal features; it never shewed itself in any other form. To justify his intemperance and his excessive love of pleasure, is impossible. These were his predominant vices; they injured him alike as a public and a private man; nay, they frequently degraded him. Eminent men, those in particular who are entrusted with the

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government of a state, are much more culpable to be addicted to such vices than the vulgar. The occupations and the enjoyments which fall to their share, are so august and so noble, that they may well disdain, even without any great effort, the attractions of voluptuousness, and the frivolous diversions which are so alluring to the generality of mankind. Potemkin, in this respect, is without an excuse. But after having thus impartially stigmatised his vices, we may be allowed to repeat that he was yet a great man, who did honour to his country, and who shed upon it a brilliancy which it has since suffered to be tarnished, and which perhaps it will never recover.

The Prince de Ligne, who had frequent opportunities of approaching Potemkin during the journey to the Crimæa, and in his first campaign, has left the following portrait of him, which has justly been pronounced a master piece.—"I here "behold," says he, in a letter to Count Ségur, written from the camp before Oczakof, on the first of August, 1788, "a commander-in-chief, "who looks idle, and is always busy; who has "no other desk than his knees, no other comb "than his fingers; constantly reclined on his "couch, yet sleeping neither in night nor in "day-time. His zeal for the Empress he adores, "keeps him incessantly awake and uneasy, and "a cannon-shot, to which he himself is not

"exposed, disturbs him with the idea that it "costs the life of some of his soldiers. Trembling for others, brave himself; stopping under "the hottest fire of a battery to give his orders, "yet more an *Ulysses* than an *Achilles*; alarmed "at the approach of danger, frolicsome when it "surrounds him; dull in the midst of pleasure; "unhappy for being too lucky, surfeited with "every thing, easily disgusted, morose, inconstant, a profound philosopher, an able minister, "a sublime politician, or like a child of ten years "of age; not revengeful, asking pardon for a pain "he has inflicted; quickly repairing an injustice, "thinking he loves God, when he fears the "devil, whom he fancies still greater and bigger "than himself; waving one hand to the females "that please him, and with the other making "the sign of the cross; embracing the foot of a "statue of the Virgin, or the alabaster neck of "his mistress; receiving numberless presents "from his sovereign, and distributing them immediately to others; accepting estates of the "Empress, and returning them, or paying her "debts without her knowledge; alienating and "re-purchasing immense tracts of land, to erect "a grand colonnade, or plant an English garden; "again getting rid of this; gambling from morn "to night, or not at all; preferring prodigality "in giving, to regularity in paying; prodigi-

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"ously rich, and not worth a farthing; abandon-
"ing himself to distrust or to confidence, to
"jealousy or to gratitude, to ill-humour or to
"pleasantry; easily prejudiced in favour of or
"against any thing, and as easily cured of a pre-
"judice; talking divinity to his generals, and
"tactics to his bishops; never reading, but
"pumping every one with whom he converses,
"and contradicting to be better informed; un-
"commonly affable, or extremely savage; affect-
"ing the most attractive or the most repulsive
"manners; appearing by turns the proudest
"Satrap of the East, or the most amiable cour-
"tier of the court of Louis XIV.; concealing,
"under the appearance of harshness, the greatest
"benevolence of heart; whimsical with regard
"to time, repasts, rest, and inclinations; like a
"child, wanting to have every thing, or, like
"a great man, knowing how to do without many
"things; sober, though seemingly a glutton;
"gnawing his fingers, or apples and turnips;
"scolding or laughing; mimicking or swearing;
"engaged in wantonness or in prayer; singing
"or meditating; calling and dismissing; sending
"for twenty aides-de-camp, and saying nothing
"to any one of them; bearing heat better than
"any man, whilst he seems to think of nothing
"but the most voluptuous baths; not caring for
"cold, though he appears unable to exist without

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" furs; always in his shirt, without drawers, or " in rich regimentals embroidered on all the " seams; barefoot, or in slippers embroidered " with spangles; wearing neither hat nor cap: it " is thus I saw him once in the midst of a musket " fire; sometimes in a night-gown, sometimes in " a splendid tunic with his three stars, his orders, " and diamonds as large as a thumb round the " portrait of the Empress; they seem placed " there to attract the balls: crooked, and almost " bent double when he is at home, and tall, erect, " proud, handsome, noble, majestic or fascinating, " when he shews himself to his army, like " *Agamemnon* in the midst of the monarchs of " Greece. What then is his magic? Genius, " natural abilities, an excellent memory, much " elevation of soul, malice without the design of " injuring, artifice without craft, a happy mixture " of caprices, the art of conquering every heart " in his good moments; much generosity, gra- " ciousness and justice in his rewards, a refined " and correct taste, the talent of guessing what " he is ignorant of, and a consummate knowledge " of mankind."

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